

**An analysis of the abuse of power by leaders in Christian organisations:
Cultural comparisons from Canada, Germany and South Africa**

by

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“I declare that *An analysis of the abuse of power in Christian organisations: Cultural comparisons from Canada, Germany and South Africa* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.”

“I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.”

Mrs Marian Jean Winter

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October 2017

Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to determine what constitutes the abuse of power by leaders in Christian organisations and how it can be addressed, especially in a multicultural context. The theoretical and empirical research defines the abuse of power, especially in Christian organisations, and outlines the results. It determines the role that culture plays in the abuse of power and presents strategies that can be used effectively to prevent or deal with the abuse of power in different cultural contexts in Christian organisations. The cultures considered in the empirical research are English-speaking Canadians, Germans (from what was formerly West Germany), and white South Africans.

In this research, the abuse of power, the aspects that define abusive leaders and the victims, and the effects of the abuse of power on the leaders, victims and the organisations are discussed. The literature and the responses from the research participants clearly confirm the existence of abusive leadership in Christian organisations. The characteristics that constitute an ethical Christian leader are defined and underlined by the responses from the respondents in this research: spiritual transformation, love, servant leadership, accountability, trust and forgiveness. Addressing the abuse of power in Christian organisations, specifically in a multicultural context is challenging. Leaders must be prepared to learn about and understand the cultures represented in the team. They also have a responsibility to challenge their team members to reflect on their cultural characteristics, to have healthy discussions and to form an organisational third culture that profits from the potential that each team member can contribute.

Key terms

Ethical Christian leadership, power, the abuse of power, Christian organisations, culture, spiritual transformation, love, servant leadership, accountability, trust, forgiveness.

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A few years ago I was asked time and again if I was planning to write a Master's Dissertation after completing my basic studies. My answer was: If I believe that God is leading me to do so, if I have a research topic that could prove to be valuable for Christian leadership and if it would bring personal growth and spiritual development, I would take up the challenge. I believe that all of these aspects have been fulfilled in writing this dissertation.

My deep gratitude goes first of all to my God and Father for giving me the strength and endurance to start and complete this research. I am thankful that He brought me together with two supervisors, Prof Louise Kretzschmar and Prof Volker Kessler, who guided and encouraged me through the research process. In their kind and professional manner, they guided me to produce this Master's Dissertation that challenged my full potential.

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Finally, I acknowledge all those who contributed to this research by sharing their experience, hurts, advice, criticism and correction, either by sharing their relevant stories and experiences, or by reading through the chapters to determine that they are written in an understandable and correct manner.

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Chapter one: An overview of the research

This master's dissertation is a theoretical and empirical research analysis of the abuse of power in Christian organisations. It also researches the relevance that the abuse of power in Christian organisations has for multicultural teams. Two contrasting personal stories illustrate the significance of this research.

1.1 Two personal stories

As a board member of a Christian organisation, I attended the annual meeting. Sitting in the front row of three rows of chairs in a semicircle, I had an excellent vantage point to observe the dynamics of 40 members, leaders and their colleagues. With the exception of one person, all came from the same cultural background. With the exception of one or two, all had lived in another culture, worked in multicultural teams, or had personally experienced other cultures. The day was positive and encouraging, and there were examples of ethical Christian leadership that left a positive impression on me.

First of all, the director of the organisation opened the meeting by reading a text from the Bible and commented on it briefly. The annual reports followed, but the director did not dominate the meeting by presenting the annual reports himself. Together with his team of colleagues in the administration office, all departments were divided into working groups with a leader for each group. Rather than reporting himself and underlining the growth of the organisation, each of the leaders of the working groups presented an annual report for the specific group for which s/he is responsible.

Secondly, all board members were in attendance, as well as a large percentage of the members, most of which had to drive at least three hours in order to be present from 10:00 until 16:00. That indicates a high level of support, interest and even enthusiasm.

Thirdly, the meeting was not plagued with lengthy discussions and arguments. The members asked relevant questions, indicating identification with the goals and developments of the organisation. Fourthly, the participants who presented their part represented various church backgrounds and ages.

The final aspect that impressed me was the desire that the 50-year-old country director expressed to set the goal to involve younger people in leadership positions in order for the organisation to become more attractive for young people who are interested to work in the organisation, as well as to reduce the average age of the team. Although every organisation faces challenges, there was a sense of functional leadership, effective structures and teamwork, as well as a board where each member recognises clearly defined responsibilities, with a common purpose to reach a common goal.

Power seemed to be evenly distributed, and there was a sense of “we” in the meeting. No single person dominated the group and there was an eagerness to share both success and unsolved challenges. Unfortunately, not all Christian organisations experience the distribution and use of their God-given power in an effective manner as is evident in the following story.

On completion of an assignment in Africa with a multi-cultural Christian organisation that is active in many developing countries around the world, a couple was informed by the CEO that they would not be returning to the previous assignment, but rather they would be reassigned to a country halfway around the world. The couple felt that their mandate in their first assignment was not completed, but the CEO stated that he would determine what God’s will is for the couple and where they should go. If they should reject the new assignment no further assignment would be offered to them.

The mandate for the new assignment was to start a program in a country where the organisation had struggled for years to become established, and obtain the necessary permits to operate in that country. With heavy hearts, the couple accepted the assignment to fulfil the mandate as spelled out by the organisation. They were accountable to the area supervisor who was accountable to the CEO (who had a reputation for using his authoritarian management style).

Three months later, the couple was removed from the assignment due to the fact that the CEO determined that they were making decisions against organisational policy without consulting him and gaining his approval, although the direct area supervisor was involved with the developments and approving the decisions. They were moved to another program where they were to be controlled by the relevant program manager and they were not given any leadership responsibilities. They submitted to the authority of the new program manager who reported their good behaviour to the CEO, informing the couple each time that he was contacted by the CEO for an update.

The CEO informed the employees in the recruiting and management base about the situation as he perceived it. It became evident that he had spoken negatively about the couple and had made it clear that they had been moved due to a lack of respect and competence. During a visit to the main country base, the couple was approached by people from various departments and were asked accusingly about the events that had taken place. Evidently the negative information had spread.

The characters in this second story represent five different cultures that work in one organisation. When the incident took place, each person was so involved with his/her own feelings and goals, that it never occurred to them to discuss the cultural differences or the

possible abuse of power. Years later it became evident that the communication and reporting between the structural levels from the program to the supervisor had taken place, but had failed between the supervisor and the CEO.

Unfortunately the abuse of power and the challenges of multicultural teams in Christian organisations are becoming increasingly relevant in our globalised society. During the process of writing this master's dissertation I have often been asked in conversations to explain my topic. After hearing the words "abuse of power in Christian organisations" I was repeatedly interrupted with the comment: "I have a story". And because the stories are real, I believe it is crucial to research the topic to gain an awareness of the abuse of power, especially in multicultural teams.

1.2 Aim and background of the dissertation

The aim of this dissertation is to determine the effects that cultural variations have on leadership, the abuse of power and the perceptions of the abuse of power as relevant to the Canadian, German and South African cultures. For the purpose of this paper, I focus on Christian organisations involving English-speaking Canadians, on the German culture as perceived in what was formerly West Germany, and on white South Africa with an English-speaking background. (Any reference to the three cultures in this dissertation falls into these categories and is referred to as Canadian, German or South African). I have chosen to analyse and compare the abuse of power in these three countries because of my close connection to and knowledge of these three cultures. My personal motivation for this study arises out of my life experience in various cultures and my exposure to the abuse of power in Christian organisations. My intent is to pose questions relevant to this important topic, and not to present a vindictive backlash based on my personal experiences.

I was born in Canada and spent the first twenty-four years of my life there before going to southern Africa with my husband. Although we spent only two terms of three-and-a-half and two years in Africa, this time strongly influenced my life, and the connection and relationship to the cultures, countries and people have strengthened over the years. My involvement in Africa through further visits and responsibilities on an organisational board over many years has confirmed my relationship and identification with the black and white African people and the appreciation of the land and its cultures.

I have lived in Germany for more than twenty-six years and it has become a further *Heimat* for me, alongside my Canadian roots and Africa experience. I have learned to speak and write German fluently, which has influenced the deep level of integration and acceptance in the German culture. As a result, I have been able to work in leadership and board levels of

German churches and organisations, as well as establishing a business and studying in Germany.

After lengthy consideration and discussion as to whether or not the white South African or the black South African culture should be included in this dissertation, I determined that there are three motivations for choosing the white South African culture:

1) The German, Canadian and white South African cultures show more similarity and would lead me to expect correlating research results. 2) Should I choose to include the black South African culture, I would be comparing two related cultures (German and Canadian) and a contrasting third culture. I would be compelled to find the similarities of the German and Canadian cultures and do a two-to-one data comparison. 3) I have chosen three cultures with more commonalities, thereby preventing further complexities in a dissertation that already includes the major themes of culture, leadership, and the abuse of power, and also draws on several academic disciplines.

The combination of the theoretical and empirical research of leadership in Christian organisations as studied in three cultures along with the ever-pertinent topic of the abuse of power is invaluable. Although the individual topics have been researched, it is difficult to find research that focuses on the abuse of power in a multicultural sense. It is my hope that the research in this dissertation will produce findings that lead to conclusions that will not only benefit monocultural teams, but also multicultural teams, especially in Christian organisations.

1.3 The value of this research

The value of the theoretical and empirical research as presented in this dissertation is threefold: academic, organisational and personal.

The research has academic value in that it contributes to the disciplines of Christian Leadership and Theological Ethics. The theoretical research describes ethical Christian leadership from the viewpoint of authors from varying cultures, describing the behaviour expected of a leader in a Christian organisation in his/her cultural context. The empirical research element of this dissertation will confirm, contribute to or critique the views discussed in the theoretical research. By generating data from the questionnaire responses from leaders in a variety of organisations in each of the three cultures, the understanding of the abuse in Christian organisations in these cultures can be increased. New knowledge can be constructed and additional insights regarding leadership in several cultural contexts can be identified.

The second value of this dissertation is the development of awareness on the part of leaders of Christian organisations of the importance of identifying cultural variances in their

teams and how the pitfalls of these variances can lead to abuse. The research results should underline the importance of choosing the appropriate leaders and making them aware of the potential for abuse in leadership, as well as identifying the abuse of power in the early stages in order to set up systems and strategies to prevent or resolve abusive situations.

Last but not least, as described in 1.1, I have a personal interest in the research topic. I have been personally involved with a broad spectrum of Christian organisations ranging from local churches to technical and non-technical mission organisations. I have been active in non-profit organisations with roles as subordinate, as a team member under the authority of boards, as an active board member and holding leadership positions. The topic of the abuse of power has not only impacted me personally, but also the lives of people that I know. There is a need to provide insights into the abuse of power within these organisations and church groups, motivating team members to engage in discussion and becoming aware of the aspects of the abuse of power from the onset of their working relationships.

Although Peggy Drexler writes her article on abuse from a non-Christian perspective, she asks a question that is worthy of consideration in Christian organisations: “Are Workplace Bullies Rewarded For Their Behavior?” (Drexler 2013:1). She uses the example of a manager who was verbally abusive to his staff, pressuring his subordinates through fear and intimidation, denying vacation requests, spreading rumours about other employees whom he did not like, making fun of them, and taking credit for successes of his employees. She claims that, although one would expect that leaders who demonstrate this type of abusive behaviour eventually fall, they are often rewarded and receive positive evaluations and even promotions from their superiors due to their “high levels of social ability and political savvy” (:2). In many cases, the workers do not report their leader’s behaviour, wanting to avoid conflict. If this behaviour is not recognized and halted, it can encourage victims to become abusive themselves.

I have both observed and experienced the abuse of power in Christian organisations. In the course of carrying out the theoretical research for this dissertation, the importance of researching culture together with the abuse of power has been confirmed. Information on each individual subject of power, abuse, leadership and culture is readily available. However, it is more difficult to find documented research on the relevance of the abuse of power *and* culture. If the abuse of power in monocultural teams is a relevant topic, how much more important is the research on the abuse of power in the ever increasing prevalence of multicultural teams. Therefore, it is my personal objective to research the interrelationship between these complex and neglected subjects in an attempt to find answers to the questions

as stated below in section 1.5.2, and to underline the importance of creating awareness of how multiculturalism can be a factor in the abuse of power.

1.4 Introduction of key terms

The title of this dissertation: “The Abuse of Power in Christian Organisations: Cultural Comparisons from Canada, Germany and South Africa” encompasses four key aspects: power, the abuse of power, Christian organisations and cultural comparisons. It is necessary to introduce these four individual terms in order to form a basis on which to connect the four aspects relevant for this research.

1.4.1 Power

Power constitutes a vital part of systems and structures in all cultures, whether in families, politics or business. Leaders exert power over subordinates, and the subordinates respond to the power exertion, resulting in interaction between the leaders and the followers. The manner in which the leader exerts power and the manner in which a subordinate responds to the leader result in conscious and subconscious preconceptions and perceptions that induce actions and reactions from both sides. “Power is necessary and problematic in organisations ... power in organisations lacks precise boundaries yet carries pervasive importance. Organisational power requires responsibility because of opportunities for abuse” (Vredenburg & Brender 1998:1337).

Whitehead and Whitehead (2003:155) indicate that Christians have been suspicious of organisational power, associating it with negative coordination and control. They claim that organisations can be strengthened through coordination and control, and can distinguish between coercion and control. This requires “accountability and ongoing purification” (:155).

In Christian organisations, the terms “authority” and “power” are sometimes used interchangeably. I have chosen to use the term “power” in this research paper. In chapter two in the theoretical section 2.1 of this dissertation I discuss and explain the terms power and authority, and I state the reasons for choosing to use the term “power” in this dissertation. The term “power” is defined as it relates to this dissertation.

1.4.2 The abuse of power

The abuse of power can be defined as “any abusive behaviour that is expressed in non-verbal cues, words, behaviour, or attitudes which are systematically repeated, destroying the mental dignity of a person, and thus, jeopardizing employment or degrading the organisational climate” (Nunez & Gonzalez 2014:36).

The discussion on the abuse of power does not refer to a single occurrence of a misunderstanding or disagreement between two colleagues, but rather a pattern of behaviour

that occurs over a period of time. In chapter two, section 2.5, the abuse of power and the relevant aspects (characteristics of the perpetrator and the victim, as well as the results for the individuals and the organisation) will be discussed more fully.

1.4.3 Christian organisations

The research in this dissertation focuses on power and the abuse of power in a broad spectrum of Christian organisations: churches, mission organisations and educational institutions. Specific information on the organisations is not included in order to prevent the organisation from becoming identifiable, thereby insuring confidentiality of the participants and the organisations that they represent. It not only discusses the abuse of power in Christian organisations, but also the most important characteristics of a Christian leader that ought to form the ethical standards of the person and organisation. There is an abundance of literature describing the characteristics of an ethical Christian leader, and the aspects necessary for building a healthy, well-functioning Christian organisation. For the purpose of this research, I have chosen to define five terms that are frequently used in the literature that are integral aspects of leadership in Christian organisations and that reflect the spectrum of the Christian life and leadership (subsection 3.2.2). These are: spiritual transformation (the need to be in a process of spiritual growth and change), love (the first commandment that should permeate every area of life), servant leadership (the attitude toward work and people), accountability (the sense of responsibility that one has for his/her actions and decisions), and trust and forgiveness¹ (what should happen to prevent abusive situations and what should happen if it goes wrong). The important aspect of justice or fairness is often referred to in this analysis as it is closely related to all the above aspects of leadership.

1.4.4 Cultural comparisons

In our age of globalisation, it is difficult to find monocultural teams, and even individuals who have not been influenced in some way by an unfamiliar culture. Therefore, it is becoming ever more vital that organisations are aware of the cultural variances represented in their organisations and teams in order to prevent abusive behaviour and misunderstandings. Thus, it is necessary to examine how power, the abuse of power and ethical leadership in the Canadian, German and South African cultures are perceived.

1.5 Methodology

This dissertation draws on both theoretical and empirical research. It begins with theoretical research by presenting the findings of the work and experience documented in articles and

¹ In this dissertation I consider trust and forgiveness as inseparable: asking for forgiveness and to forgive are important, but trust must be restored.

books written by a broad spectrum of authors who define and expose the abuse of power in leadership. The abuse of power in Christian organisations is examined in light of the cultural dimensions and aspects of leadership in the Canadian, German and South African cultures. The empirical research that follows in chapters five and six is drawn from the structure and findings of the theoretical research, generating data from leaders of Christian organisations in Canada, Germany and South Africa. Ethical leadership, power, the abuse of power, culture and the abuse of power, and possible solutions are investigated. Both the theoretical research and the questionnaire for the empirical research are designed to follow Osmer's tasks as presented in Section 1.5.3.

1.5.1 Fields of study

The main academic fields of this research are Christian Leadership and Theological Ethics. The field of cultural studies and its relevance in Christian Leadership and Theological Ethics is drawn upon to analyse the role that culture plays in the abuse of power in Christian organisations.

1.5.1.1 Theological Ethics and Christian Leadership

Theological or Christian Ethics is “primarily concerned with one's overall ethical worldview, what is considered to be loving, right and good (norms and values), the application (and questioning) of these norms in personal and social life, the formation of moral character and moral conduct” (Kessler & Kretzschmar 2015:5). It is based on the Bible, 2000 years of Christian theology, tradition, experience, and on the “foundation of a Creator God who is good” (:5).

Two links between the disciplines of Theological Ethics and Christian Leadership can be identified. Firstly, there is the need for leaders to reflect on their “co-operation with the Holy Spirit in the process of personal moral formation and the formation of churches as moral communities” (:6). Secondly, before attempting to bring about transformation in local and global societies, Christian leaders need to be sure of their own understanding of what they consider to be right and good.

Kessler and Kretzschmar (2015) present two ways of using the term “Christian leadership”: Christians who lead within a Christian organisation that has its base in the Christian faith (e.g. a church, mission agency, non-profit organisation); and secondly, Christians who lead in secular organisations (e.g. businesses, companies, government, secular non-profit organisations) and desire to reflect a “Christian worldview, anthropology and set of values” (Kessler & Kretzschmar 2015:2).

In chapter three the character of an ethical Christian leader is discussed, and this topic is further researched in the questionnaire where Christian leaders are asked to list five attributes that they consider are essential for an ethical Christian leader to portray, as well as providing answers to further relevant questions.

Although this dissertation focuses on leadership in Christian organisations, I have integrated general cultural leadership aspects as found in the secular literature for each of the three countries: Canada, Germany and South Africa. There is a wealth of management/leadership literature that discusses valuable leadership principles that can be considered alongside the theological and ethical Christian literature and research. One of these sources is Vredenburg and Brender's (1998) hierarchical abuse of power as explained in section 2.5.3.

1.5.1.2 Cultural studies

Because of globalisation and the vast movement of people, not only from one city to the next, but also from country to country, the significance of the role that culture plays in Christian leadership is growing. It is important for leaders to broaden their understanding of the cultures represented in their teams, to understand their own theological standpoints, and to be reflective about the cultural contexts in which these are applied. The cultural dimensions from the research that Hofstede and Hofstede (2010) carried out are a rich resource and great gift for leaders to help them to begin to expand their understanding of those whom they lead. This field is essential to the research in this dissertation.

1.5.2 Research questions

Based on the premise that abuse of power occurs in Christian organisations, the theoretical and empirical research attempts to answer the following main research question with the help of the four sub-questions:

What constitutes the abuse of power of leaders in Christian organisations in the three cultures and how can it be addressed?

1. What is the abuse of power, especially in Christian organisations, and what are its results?
2. What role does culture play in the abuse of power?
3. What do the results of the empirical research reveal about actual abuse in multicultural teams in Christian organisations, and do these results confirm the insights contained in the relevant literature?
4. What strategies can be used to effectively prevent or deal with the abuse of power in different cultural contexts in Christian organisations?

Founded on the literature research, personal studies and experience, and listening to the stories of others, I initially summarized my answers to the above questions as follows: Abuse of power takes place in all cultures. However, how the abuse is exercised and how it is perceived is dependent on the culture of the leader and the victim (of which they themselves are not always aware). I seek to investigate this hypothesis.

1.5.3 Theoretical Research: Literature Review

The theoretical research of this dissertation is found in chapters two, three and four. Johann Mouton (2001:86-87) explains the importance of the literature review. First of all, it is important to discover how others have investigated the problem that is being researched, and to establish what their research has produced. It is possible to learn about the available research instrumentation that has been used successfully in the past. This results in ensuring that the research is not simply duplicating what others have already carried out. Furthermore, it is valuable to discover the most current theories on the subjects or issues under discussion and the most widely accepted findings on these subjects. The theoretical research also provides the most widely accepted definitions on the relevant subjects and reveals the areas that require further research.

Richard Osmer (2008:Pos.87) describes four core tasks of practical theological interpretation that assist in guiding the response and providing a structure for research interpretation. The four core tasks with the coinciding questions are:

1. Descriptive-empirical task: What is going on? The task is the gathering of information (both theoretical and through the empirical research) to discern patterns and dynamics in situations or contexts.
2. Interpretive task: Why is this going on? The task is to draw on theories of arts and sciences to help one understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics occur.
3. Normative task: What ought to be going on? The task is to interpret situations or context with the use of theological concepts and constructing ethical norms to help guide the responses.
4. Pragmatic task: How might we respond? The task is to determine strategies of action to be able to influence situations in a desirable manner.

Initially I had decided that it would be beneficial to begin with the normative task by describing what constitutes ethical Christian leadership and how this is expressed in the three cultures. This was to be followed by the descriptive-empirical task to determine what constitutes the abuse of power. However, in the process of defining power and authority, it became evident that it would be more logical to begin with the descriptive-empirical task by

explaining what is going on and describing the dynamics of power and its abuse. The interpretive task follows, in which I attempt to determine why the abuse of power takes place and expose the results of the abuse of power.

Chapter two begins with the descriptive-empirical task by defining power and authority, the reasons for choosing the term *power*, and, subsequently, an explanation of power. In the descriptive-empirical task the theoretical research describes the characteristics of abusive leadership and the victims, as well as the results for the victims and the organisation. Geschnitzer's (2013) description of French and Raven's power bases and their own publications (1959) on social power and conflict along with Whitehead and Whitehead's (2000) faces of personal power lay a foundation for the discussion on power. The ethical guidelines for the use of power from Kessler (2010) complete the theoretical research on power.

Chapter two also develops the interpretive task in defining the abuse of power and why it occurs in Christian organisations. Vredenburg and Brender's (1998) hierarchical abuse model provides an overview of the factors that play a role in the process of the abuse of power. Their model is the result of research that they completed and is one of the few research projects that I was able to find on the topic of the abuse of power. Kessler and Kessler (2017) provide descriptions of the perpetrators as well as the victims of the abuse of power, and personality disorders of abusive leaders are described according to de Vries (2015). Personal results of abuse are taken from Johnson and van Vonderen (1991) and their discussion on spiritual abuse. Finally, I presented a portion of my research in a workshop on the topic of spiritual abuse where I also met and translated for Dr. Lisa Oakley (2013). Although this was quite late in my research process, I was able to draw from her research and experience as documented in her presentation and her book.

Chapter three moves on to the normative task, where the theme of ethical Christian leadership is developed, defining what should be happening in Christian organisations. From the vast selection of terms used by a broad spectrum of authors to define ethical Christian leadership, I have chosen to discuss spiritual transformation, love, servant leadership, accountability, and trust and forgiveness. As stated in the introduction, I have chosen these terms because they are most often considered to be lacking in association with the abuse of power in the literature. The important aspect of justice or fairness is referred to often as it is closely related to all the above aspects of leadership. The main resources for the theoretical research defining these terms are Kretzschmar (2006), Kessler (2012), Stahlke and Loughlin

(2003). The theoretical research regarding leadership in a multicultural context draws from the work of Plueddemann (2009) and Lingenfelter (2008).

Chapter four is a combination of the descriptive-empirical, interpretive and normative tasks. By describing in detail the Canadian, German and South African cultures, these questions are addressed: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? They are described and compared with a presentation of the relevant cultural parameters according to Hofstede (2010). Hofstede's (2010) research provides the basis for the comparison of power distance, individualism and collectivism, assertiveness and modesty, uncertainty-avoidance, and short-term and long-term orientation.

Richard D. Lewis (2005) provides an analysis on cultural diversity, focussing on leadership cultures, as well as giving a detailed, cultural description of specific countries around the world. This chapter is valuable for completing the normative task by describing the behaviour of leaders and subordinates that one could expect in each of the countries represented in this research. Literature on doing business in the three countries gives practical insights into leadership culture, revealing the details and differences in what at first glance appear to be similar cultures.

Hofstede's (2010) six cultural dimensions give insight into and a basis for comparison of the three cultures represented in this dissertation. Erin Meyer (2014) has done extensive research on cultures, and I have chosen to focus on her research on the low-context and high-context communication in cultures. It is important to include this dimension because communication plays an integral role in the function of organisations.

A presentation of the leadership dimensions determined from the results of the GLOBE study further develops the discussion on leadership cultures. House's (2004) Globe Study of 62 Societies describes the three cultures in more detail, differentiating between former East and West Germany, French and English Canada, as well as white and black South Africa. The theoretical and empirical research documented in his book connects leadership and culture. His 'Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory' is based on his studies that are recognised globally. His detailed research forms an interesting and valuable basis for comparison with the actual empirical findings that leaders from Germany, Canada and South Africa obtained through the questionnaires. Further detailed cultural research findings are found in the sequel to this earlier research (Chhokar et al 2012) based on in-depth studies of 25 societies.

Initially I had planned to include the cultural models from Trompenaars and Hampden (2014). However, due to the complexity of the interweaving of topics in this dissertation, I

have determined that the additional data and information from their research would not only become repetitive from a cultural information viewpoint, but also exceed the framework of the dissertation.

Lastly, the pragmatic task attempts to identify appropriate strategies for identifying or preventing abuse, especially in multicultural teams. This final task according to Osmer is developed in the final chapters of this dissertation where appropriate solutions and strategies for prevention, recognition and treatment of the abuse of power are presented.

1.5.4 Empirical research

The empirical research is designed to complement, expand and modify the foundation laid through the theoretical research in chapters two, three and four. Jennifer Mason (2002) points out the importance of reflecting on and determining how theory, data, and the analysis of the information can be given clarity, bringing them into a beneficial cohesiveness. She presents three broad models as possibilities.

The first model presents the theory at the onset of the research and analysis, and it is “tested on or measured against data” (Mason 2002:180). The collected data is measured up against the clearly stated hypotheses. This theory first model is also referred to as deductive reasoning or “hypothetico deductive method” (:180). It means that the initial hypotheses are modified by the empirical research.

In the second model, theory “comes last and is developed from or through data generation and analysis” (:180). The process of analysis and data generation occurs at the same time, and theoretical research can be used to support the process. The analysis of data will result in theories. This model is linked to inductive reasoning and often referred to as “Glaser and Strauss’s grounded theorizing” (:180) and their “constant comparative method” (:180) and was called the “grounded theory”.

In the third model, “theory, data generation and data analysis are developed simultaneously in a dialectical process” (:180). This model requires the researcher to move between data analysis and the explanation and/or construction of theory.

The research carried out in this dissertation is a combination of the first and third models in that the theoretical foundation is laid, and all aspects of the research are clearly defined. The empirical research modifies the theoretical research. Thus, I refer to Merriam’s (1998:49) reference to research being able to shape or modify the existing theory rather than developing new constructs and concepts (grounded theory), and, at the same time, adding to the knowledge and recommendations relevant to the research topic. This model is most adaptive to the gathering of theoretical and empirical data, and the analysis of the data in this

dissertation. It is my intention to shape or modify the existing knowledge about the abuse of power in Christian organisations, and to extend the existing findings, using the empirical findings on the abuse of power relating to multicultural teams, a field that has not been widely researched in the past.

The empirical research allows me to expand on the theoretical research. The experiences shared by the respondents bring life to the research, not only by shaping or modifying the theoretical research, but also by presenting the reality of the abuse of power in Christian organisations as experienced in real life. In chapter five the development and description of the empirical research is presented in detail.

The empirical research was carried out by sending a questionnaire to at least six participants from each of the three countries represented in this research with the goal of receiving five completed questionnaires from leaders in each of the countries: Canada, Germany and South Africa. The questionnaire is structured to obtain data on each of the four aspects as reflected in the title of the dissertation: power, the abuse of power, ethical Christian leadership and culture. The methodology for the development of the questionnaire, the pre-test, and the reasons for the selection of participants, as well as the method for analysis of the data are presented in detail in chapter five. Chapter six contains the analysis of the questionnaire data as received from the research participants, beginning with the data analysis for each country, and moving on to a cultural comparison of the data, also drawing on the earlier theoretical discussion on the abuse of power.

1.6 Answers to the research questions and conclusions

In chapters seven and eight of this dissertation solutions to the abuse of power in Christian organisations are presented, including the answers to the research questions as stated in 1.4.1 and the final conclusions drawn from the theoretical and empirical research.

1.7 Conclusion

Chapter one begins with two contrasting stories from Christian organisations. The first story is an example of a healthy, well-functioning organisation, the second an example of the abuse of power. These stories from various cultures and countries set the tone for the dissertation. The chapter provides an overview of the dissertation's aim and background, and the research value. The key terms that make up the title of this dissertation are explained: power, the abuse of power, Christian organisations, and cultural comparisons.

Based on Osmer's four core tasks of practical theological interpretation, an overview of the structure and content of chapters is presented, including the main theoretical resources. The methodology for the theoretical research is explained, including a description of the fields

of study relating to this research: Christian Leadership, Theological Ethics, and Cultural Studies. The research questions are clearly stated. Reference is made to the methodology of the empirical research (explained in chapter five), as well as the empirical analysis (explained in chapter six).

In this chapter the foundation is laid and the tone is set for the theoretical research in the following three chapters, as well as the empirical research in the further two chapters. In the subsequent and final chapters the research questions as stated in this chapter will be answered.

Chapter two: Power and the abuse of power

This chapter unfolds by addressing Osmer's descriptive task and proceeds to answer the question: What is happening? This question is answered by differentiating between the terms "authority" and "power" and discussing aspects of power and the abuse of power. The key issues addressed are the faces of power, the lifelong development of the sense of power in individuals according to Whitehead and Whitehead (2000), the power bases according to Gschnitzer (2013) and French and Raven (1959), and ethical guidelines for exercising power (Kessler 2010). The chapter continues with a description of the types of abuse of power in Christian organisations, as well as a detailed explanation of the hierarchical abuse of power from Vredenburg and Brender (1998). This is followed by answering the question posed in Osmer's interpretive task: Why is this happening? The question is answered by describing the attributes of perpetrators and the victims and evaluating the results of abuse for individuals and organisations.

2.1 Defining authority and power

In Christian organisations, the terms *authority* and *power* are sometimes used interchangeably. Thus, it is important to define these terms, distinguish the differences between them, and explain why I have chosen to use the term *power* in this dissertation.

Kessler (2010) defines power and authority using the original Greek terms used in the New Testament, claiming that most Christians prefer to use the term "authority" rather than "power" as it has a more positive, spiritual connotation. Jesus executed both authority (*exousia*) and power (*dynamis*) as seen in Luke 4:36 and Luke 9:1. "The Greek word *dynamis* means the ability to do something. It can be translated with *force*, *strength* or *power*. The Greek word *exousia* refers more closely to the permission, the legitimation to do something" (Kessler 2010:535). He concludes that "Authority and power should go hand in hand" (:535).

Authority (*exousia*) means I MAY do something (I have the permission). Power (*dynamis*) means I CAN carry it out (I have the ability or force). It is possible to have power without having been given the authority to exercise the power. For example, a major donor may attempt to manipulate the organisation to make decisions according to his/her opinion, threatening to withdraw donations if his/her advice is not put into action. The donor may have the power to give and to express an opinion, but s/he does not have the authority to make the decisions and determine the direction of the organisation. At the same time, a leader can be given the authority to lead an organisation, but s/he may not have the power necessary to

provide the functional leadership that the organisation needs. Thus, it is possible to have authority without power – and *visa versa*.

Max Weber, the German sociologist, is well known for his definitions of power and authority. He defines power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber 2013:53). In his article on authority and power in leadership, Coleman (1997) presents Weber’s comparison of these two terms, saying that, whereas power is associated with “personal characteristics of individuals or groups” (Coleman 1997:31), authority is associated with “social positions and roles” (:31). In contrast to power, authority must be consensual and legitimized, and the “right to command (and the probability of obedience) exists as a settled mutual expectation” (:32). Authority legitimises leaders to exercise the power that they have within a defined boundary. Power, on the other hand, can be exercised without direct engagement or involvement in decision-making by influencing processes “behind the scenes” (:42).

For this dissertation I choose to use the term “power” in order to maintain the advantage of studying its use and abuse within Christian organisations independently from examining the aspects that would be associated with the boundaries of authority leaders may have been given to exercise their power, and whether these boundaries were ignored. By examining the abuse of power rather than authority, it is possible to collect data from leaders who may see themselves as the victims of abuse from their subordinates. In using the term “power” I am examining how people use or abuse that which they are capable or have the ability to do.

Because the term “power” is a central theme of this dissertation, I have constructed the following definition of power as it relates to a Christian leader in a Christian organisation: Power is the probability and ability that a Christian leader has to be positively or negatively influential in the organisation that s/he leads. The positive influence should result in the empowerment of others in the organisation to accomplish effectively the task(s) for which the organisation exists.

2.2 Power in leadership

Whitehead and Whitehead (2003) view power not so much as something in itself, but rather a process that develops within a person and between people. “To mature is to grow in power” (Whitehead & Whitehead 2003:83). “Power is more a process than a thing. Power points to something that happens *between* people, something going on, an interaction. Power is not so much a possession as a way of relating” (:150). Whitehead and Whitehead differentiate

between personal power and social power. Whereas personal power “points to my awareness of *myself* as strong, the ways I find myself capable or coercive in interaction with others” (:150), social power refers to the strength in the group and the authority of the organisation. It is “an awareness of the differences in strength among us – what these differences are and how we will deal with them” (:150). Social power and personal power are related in that an individual becomes aware of his/her personal power through group interaction. In the following sections, faces of personal power, as well as the development of power in an individual are discussed.

2.2.1 Faces of personal power

Whitehead and Whitehead identify five faces of personal power.

Table 2.1 Faces of Personal Power

Mode	Experienced as	Needed in
Power On	initiative and influence	adult competence
Power Over	coordination and control	organisational leadership
Power Against	competition and conflict	assertion and negotiation
Power For	service and nurturance	parenthood and ministry
Power With	mutuality and collaboration	interdependence and dependability

(Whitehead & Whitehead 2003:151)

Power On: An individual realizes that s/he can have influence on the environment and can have an impact. It leads to independence and is necessary for adult competence, enabling the adult to have a sense of autonomy and adequacy. However, if this confidence is not developed, a lack of power on or influence results in an over-dependency on others and a lack of adequacy in oneself resulting in the expectation that others must satisfy one’s needs. If others do not fulfil this expectation, the leader could become abusively insistent that these needs of inadequacy be fulfilled by the subordinates.

Power Over: An individual learns to influence, and to take charge of a situation, managing the power of others. This power over or control is not negative (and is actually necessary to an extent for organisational leadership) if it is exercised to reach a common goal with accountability, resisting the temptation to manipulate others. It is realized through the coordination. When this power fails, teams become ineffective because decisions are not made, resources are not utilized, and energy is lost. However, there is uneasiness about this face of power because of the fear of control and manipulation, which could result in the abuse of power.

Power Against: An individual learns to deal maturely with competition and conflict, even to stand against the power of others and survive. This strength is necessary to work out differences with colleagues and family members and to maintain integrity, standing up against the wrong. On the other hand, there is a fear of using this power and entering conflicts that

become destructive and abusive. It is important to be able to mediate and work out conflicts to avoid the destructive end that confrontations can have and to use the power one has to become abusive in order to win each conflict.

Power For: An individual must learn to be aware of the power s/he has to be strong for others. It enables individuals to be aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. It means looking out for the good of others and caring for them and is necessary for family and ministry. If this nurturance and servant attitude is lacking, the others are not empowered by the individual. The individual may also have an attitude of dominance over rather than for others, creating tension between the strong and the weak and increasing the danger of the individual abusing his/her power.

Power With: This face of power recognizes individual strength, but realizes the importance of coming together to be strong together – “the ability to enjoy *mutual* influence and *mutual* empowerment” (:158). It means interdependence and mutual dependability: I depend on others and they, in turn, can depend on me.

The faces of power are relevant for leadership and maturity in exercising power in leadership. While the faces of power can be used to have a positive influence on others, they can result in the abuse of power if not developed in the individual or kept in check through organisational accountability. The development of this power in the following section is closely linked to the five faces of power.

2.2.2 Development of power in an individual

With reference to the book *Power: The Inner Experience* by David McClelland (1975), Whitehead and Whitehead (2000:116) present valuable insights into power and how it develops in individuals through their lifetime. This process is significant for leadership and how the leader exerts his/her power, as well as how the person perceives the exertion of power from others. Thus, the development process becomes significant for considerations on the abuse of power in Christian organisations.

In a cross-cultural study, McClelland identified four basic levels in which individuals develop to feel strong or empowered, which can be linked to Whitehead and Whitehead's (2003) power on.² On the basis of one's life experience, the sense of being strong is developed, but personal hurts and cultural pressures can affect the level of this development.

² McClelland's four levels of development of power in an individual are based on a lifelong process that begins in childhood and carries on to adulthood. These four levels are used differently from the level 5 classification by Jim Collins (2001), where the focus is on capability, competence and effectiveness of leaders and executives in adulthood. Collins claims that a level 5 leader exhibits the qualities of personal humility and professional will, distinguishing him/herself by greatness, in comparison to the level 1 to 4 leaders: level 1 – highly capable, level 2 – contributing team member, level 3 – competent manager, level 4 – effective leader.

The first level of experiencing power is referred to as receptivity. Receptivity opens people to the strength of others. Individuals should feel empowered and safe in the presence of others who exercise their power during their childhood development. This carries on into adult life through the strength that individuals gain by the love and support of others and from God. As this power matures, individuals open up to the power received from others. Should they experience hurts or feel demeaned, they will become hesitant to depend on others. On the other hand, healing results in the renewed experience of power and the love received from others. This first level of experiencing power is closely related to the power “for” and power “with” as described in the last section. Not only do individuals learn to feel safe in the presence of others, but they also learn to receive and give support.

The second level of empowerment is autonomy. Autonomy helps people to savor the power they have if on their own. It results in independence achieved through the recognition that one can manage life as one becomes an adult. However, it is important that individuals develop beyond the level of autonomy. Failure to do so results in being incapable of accepting outside influence or suggestions because of feeling inadequate or powerless in doing so. This second level is linked to the power with, in that the individuals realize that they have influence on others, but can also become independent and autonomous.

In the third level the strengths and power that people have developed can be used in order to influence the social environment. “When power means influence, we become involved with developing and directing other people’s power” (Whitehead & Whitehead 2000:119). The power that people experience through assisting and coordinating can have positive results, but it can also lead to considering oneself to have more power than is actually beneficial, causing an intolerance of the ideas of others and an attitude of knowing better than the others, resulting in the abuse of power. This level can be linked to the power over, power against and power for as discussed in the previous section. Individuals learn to have a healthy leadership power and can also bring conflicts to a positive end.

The final level of power identified by McClelland is the “We”. The individual realizes that “God’s power is not in short supply” (Whitehead & Whitehead 2000:125). A leader who has reached this level is open to influence and suggestions from others, not needing to receive the recognition for the ideas and successes that s/he as an individual has brought to the organisation, but realizing the value of the participation of others for the development and achievement of the task. S/he is not threatened by the power of others, but rather welcomes the contributions. This is the “we” attitude of a “level four” leader, and a “we” leader is

considered to be a mature leader. This level is closely connected to the “power with” in that it stresses the “we” and the value of cooperation.

In the discussion on the faces of power as well as the development of power in an individual, important aspects of choosing leaders become evident. First of all, methods of interviewing potential leaders must be established to determine whether the individual has reached the “we” level. Secondly, it is important to establish whether a leader has had negative experiences in any of the levels that have not been dealt with and could hinder the process of development. Thirdly, leaders should receive the necessary training to develop and nurture an attitude of self-reflection with regards to the faces and development of power, and the positive and negative aspects of each.

2.3 Power bases

In addition to the discussion on the faces of power and the development of power in an individual, it is beneficial to consider the bases that leaders can use in order to exert their power. French and Raven (1959) identified the importance of social influence and power and leadership, and that leadership is closely linked to how a leader influences the members of a group or organisation: in social situations this is called “power”. Their model attempts to identify how the different forms of power affect how one leads and how successful the leader will be.

The social psychologists John R.P. French and Bertram Raven (1959:259) studied power and influence and their relationship to each other. On the one hand, they studied what determines the behaviour of the person exerting power, and, on the other hand, what determines the reactions of the person on whom this power is exerted. They divided power into five distinct forms or power bases: coercive, reward, legitimate, referent and expert. In 1965 Raven added a sixth form: informational (direct or indirect) power base.³

Table 2.2 Power Bases: French and Raven

Power base	Description
Coercive	Leading through force, threat or punishment Can be personal or impersonal
Reward	Offering rewards for obedience, performance or compliance Can be personal or impersonal
Legitimate	Power is given to a person when placed in a position by election, selection or appointment.
Referent	Power is based on the group and the organisational affiliations that a leader has.
Expert	Based on the information the leader has, experience and credentials of the leader.
Informational	Based on the influence that a leader has in possessing knowledge and information that is important for others to have.

³ Kessler (2010:540) divides the referent power into two further categories: power by relations and power by charisma. (In this dissertation I refer to only six power bases).

2.3.1 Coercive power base

A coercive power base involves leading through force, threat or punishment, which can be effective if the threat is believable and feasible. However, this power base is often used when no other methods are available and the leader has a personal need for attention, requiring the submission of his/her followers. The application of coercive power can be personal (termination of position, transfer to a worse position, or invoking physical pain) and impersonal (devaluation, rejection or ignoring others). Thus, it becomes clear that coercive power could be effective if an organisation is experiencing a crisis, and the leader needs to make clear decisions and give clear instructions to all without discussion. On the other hand, coercive power can destroy an organisation if the leader becomes a dictator and will not acknowledge the strengths and valuable contributions of the colleagues.

2.3.2 Reward power base

A reward power base refers to the right to offer rewards to someone for obedience, performance or compliance. It also includes the power of a leader to deny others something for failing to meet the expectations of the leader. The reward power base can be further divided into two categories: impersonal rewards (promise of rewards in the form of material resources) and personal rewards (receiving approval from key people, compliments, attention and acceptance). Reward power can be used by a leader to motivate the followers and increase their production levels. At the same time, this power can be abused in that rewards are granted as a form of bribery to gain the support of some of the subordinates. Using reward power to withhold rewards can result in a form of punishment or showing favouritism, leading to unfair treatment.

2.3.3 Legitimate power base

A legitimate power base is the power given to a person when placed in a position by election, selection or appointment. A structural hierarchy is important in order for this power base to function, and is based on cultural values (acceptance of these structures and the designation of the leader). This power base can be used to serve those who have placed trust in the leader by electing, selecting or appointing that person. The power base can be misused by taking on the position and considering oneself to have been given the authority without feeling a sense of accountability.

2.3.4 Referent power base

A referent power base is based on the group and the organisational affiliations that a leader has. This has positive and negative references, depending on how the affiliation is viewed. It also involves charm and admiration, and can be useful in combination with other forms of

power. This power base is used by the charismatic leader who draws followers through personality and the ability to motivate people. It's negative side is the danger of the formation of in- and out-groups, which could lead to organisational divisions.

2.3.5 Expert power base

An expert power base is present if a member of the organisation has access to information, and can decide as to whether or not s/he shares the information. It is based on what one knows as well as the experience and credentials that one possesses. It is important that others perceive that the person has expertise in order to grant the leader power. Positive expert power results in positive influence, whereas negative expert power results in opposition to the expert's instructions. This could be the result if a leader flaunts his/her credentials and does not accept inputs from others because s/he claims to know all there is to know in a given situation.

2.3.6 Informational power base

The informational power base is the influence that a person has in possessing knowledge that is important for others to have (for example national security data, personnel information etc.). Direct informational power results in being able to have a direct influence on others, and indirect informational power has an indirect influence on others.

In examining these power bases closely, it becomes evident that, depending on how a leader applies the power base in a leadership position, as well as in a specific situation, the results can be positive or negative, as was also evident with the faces of personal power. A leader's ability and willingness for honest self-reflection is a valuable asset and is beneficial in preventing abusive behaviour. The power bases from French and Raven are helpful for leaders to reflect on the personal power base that they apply in the various types of leadership positions in which the leaders find themselves. Self-reflection should result in an awareness of the bases that could incite the abuse of power in certain situations. Leaders should ask themselves which power bases they possess, and which power bases they should apply in various settings in a leadership position in an organisation. Plueddemann (2009:153) refers to this as situational leadership, and views the ability of a leader to adapt the appropriate leadership style to the situation as essential for managing multicultural teams.

2.4 Ethics and power

I conclude this subsection on power before moving on to the following sections on the abuse of power by listing Kessler's (2010) seven ethical guidelines for exercising power as a Christian leader. They refer to aspects of leadership, power, the abuse of power and culture in

this dissertation. The basic ethical principles of exercising power in such a way as to avoid the abuse of power are summarised:

1. Say *Yes* to power. Power is a gift from God.
2. Remember that every power is on loan from God – and we are accountable to Him.
3. Exercise your leadership as a responsible service: serving God, serving the organisation, and serving the people outside and inside the organisation.
4. Use your power for good or to prevent bad. But never strive for power as an end in itself.
5. Which power base are you willing and able to use (depending on your context and your personality)? Each power base may be used appropriately or abused.
6. Respect the culture of the people you lead and especially their perception of power. Where does biblical ethics demand a transformation of the culture (e.g. if might prevails over right)?
7. Be open to criticism of your use of power. Ask mature persons for feedback on your leadership style. (Kessler 2010:548).

This concludes the discussion on power: the definition, power in leadership (faces of personal power and the development of power), the power bases and basic ethical principles. Having examined these aspects in the sense of how power should be used, it is now appropriate to discuss the abuse of power.

2.5 The abuse of power

This subsection begins by defining the abuse of power and describing types of abuse. It is followed by studying Vredenburg and Brender's (1998) model of the hierarchical abuse of power. Their model presents an overview of many aspects of the abuse of power and presents the findings of actual research on the topic of the abuse of power. This is important, as much of the theoretical data on the topic of the abuse of power is drawn from authors who write from their personal experiences and their wisdom, but it is not based on empirical research.

2.5.1 Definition

The abuse of power in Christian organisations is referred to as “mobbing”, and can be defined as continual, repeated aggression that is expressed in non-verbal cues, words and behaviour that has a negative impact on the victim's dignity and the organisational climate. (Nunez & Gonzalez 2014:36). It is important to note that the abuse of power does not refer to a single incident, but rather a behavioural pattern that develops over a period of time and repeatedly takes place. Furthermore, it is often assumed that a leader intentionally abuses his/her power. However, the abuse can also be unintentional and the leader may be unaware of the way in which the colleagues perceive his/her behaviour

2.5.2 Types of abuse

In general, when abuse is mentioned, people associate the term with sexual, physical or psychological abuse. Unfortunately these more apparent forms of abuse are more prevalent than anyone cared to admit in the past. Physical or sexual abuse takes place when persons are treated in a way that damages them physically or sexually. Psychological abuse is associated with brainwashing, and attacking others on an emotional level.⁴

However, the abuse discussed in this dissertation is a spiritual and emotional form of abuse that can leave deep wounds and results in people experiencing emotional damage and having a “hard time trusting a spiritual system again” (Johnson & van Vonderen 1991:50).

If mobbing occurs on a spiritual level it is referred to as spiritual abuse. Spirituality can be misused as a tool to abuse employees, making them feel that they must endure the mistreatment in order to be a good Christian and to fulfil the mission of the organisation. This abuse can take place in various ways: Leaders quote Scripture to measure their followers’ commitment or calling, communicating an individual’s unsuitability for a task, pressuring people to resign by degrading them in front of others, demoting people or reducing their salary (without informing them), providing limited or biased information about an employee in a meeting, leaving a negative impression of that employee, falsely accusing subordinates in front of others, withholding recognition (allegedly so that the employee will not become proud), and employees not being given the opportunity to defend themselves.

Spiritual abuse can be the result of “uncertain, tentative and ineffective” (Kretzschmar 2006:47) leaders who compensate for their insecurity by becoming domineering and coercive, leading to conflicts and mismanagement of resources. Individuals and organisations suffer long term effects from this type of immoral or immature character.

2.5.3 The hierarchical abuse of power

Vredenburg and Brender (1998) have extensively researched the hierarchical abuse of power in work organisations. They conducted a survey over four years with a sample of 505 MBA students in a business school in the United States. Their research led to the formation of the process model that conceptualizes the abusive exercise of power. It is a “linear representation of a set of variables that define a theoretically meaningful sequence of related conditions and actions” (Vredenburg & Brender 1998:1341). This model portrays how “individual attributes and organisational conditions interact as individuals make decisions and undertake actions that have outcomes” (:1341). It is beneficial for this dissertation as it summarizes the motives,

⁴ Oakley (2013:56) states that spiritual abuse cannot be incorporated into models of other types of abuse. However, it is necessary that this form of abuse be clearly recognised as a specific form of abuse.

attributes, conditions and sources, decisions, strategies and outcomes of the abusive exercise of power in organisations.

The hierarchical abuse of power is defined as “acts which manifest disrespect for a subordinate’s dignity or provide obstacles to a subordinate’s performance or deserved rewards” (:1339). According to Vredenburg and Brender (1998), the abusive exercise of power violates ethical standards in four main categories: 1) “If individuals deserve dignity in and of themselves, workplaces should not allow the managerial exercise of power to devalue the human worthiness of a subordinate” (:1344). 2) Subordinates have a right to “privacy, truthfulness and safety, which acts of power abuse often violate” (:1344). 3) The abuse of power is unethical when it violates the norms and laws of the community (e.g. if a manager interferes with the performance of a subordinate, or denies rewards). 4) Fairness and justice cannot be practised selectively by a leader (e.g. being friendly or overly supportive to some and unfair to others).

They go on to say that organisational hierarchies carry the potential for abuse because they can be conducive to determining the actions of subordinates by determining the acquisition or the withholding of rewards, being allowed to reach personal goals, combined with privilege and prestige for some, and manipulating those with less power. They define two aspects of power that cause managers to be prone to abusing their power:

1. Relational nature: Subordinates are dependent on their authority for rewards.
2. Nonrational use: “organisations are contexts of manifest and latent conflicts” (:1338). These conflicts can develop into a political or emotional issue, resulting in power being used for nonrational conflict behaviour in an organisation.

Two premises for the exercise of power underlie the concept of hierarchical abuse:

1. The powerholder can exercise power to increase or decrease the subordinate’s feelings of dignity and self-respect. Some examples of this type of abusive exercise of power are demanding cooperation in illegal proceedings, physical harassment, verbal harassment or public embarrassment, insisting on conformity, harmful gossip, lying, exaggerating or making promises that one cannot keep.
2. S/he can exercise power to diminish the subordinate’s work performance and acquisition of deserved rewards. This may occur when the manager accepts credit for the work that his/her subordinate has done, depriving subordinates of the resources that are necessary for the task at hand, attributing one’s own poor performance to other’s performance, and discriminating against subordinates in performance appraisals. Frequent abuse of power results in the

acceptability of the abusive behaviour, and can result in the formation of new norms within an organisation.

In the following subsections, the model of the hierarchical abuse of power is explained. Moving from left to right, the process begins with the influence that the powerholders' motives and attributes have. The activating conditions and organisational sources contribute to the process, resulting in subsequent decisions, strategies and outcomes. The arrows on the dotted lines indicate that the outcomes have an effect on powerholders' motives, as well as the organisational sources, indicating a repetitive cycle.

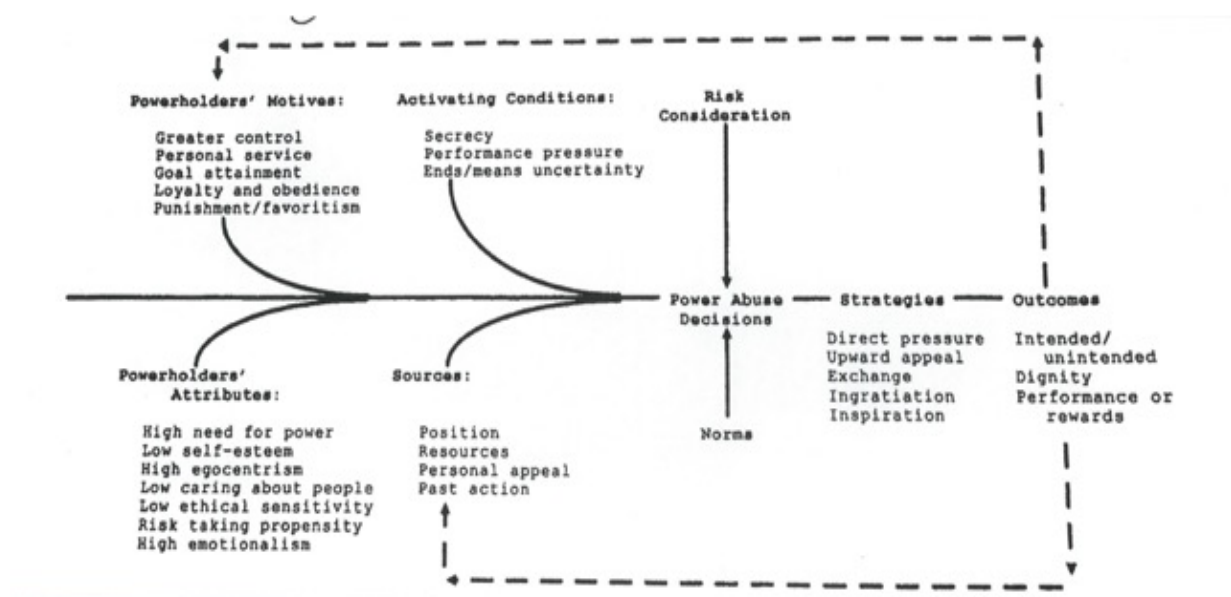


Figure 2.1 The hierarchical abuse of power (Vredenburg & Brender 1998:1340)

2.5.3.1 Powerholders' motives and attributes

According to Vredenburg and Brender's (:1342) findings, the primary causes of abuse of power come from the leader's lack of moral motives and attributes. This includes the need for control, the desire for personal service, achieving personal and/or organisational goals, the need for expressions of loyalty and obedience, as well as punishing or favouring individuals. The attributes that were identified in pursuing the motives are a high need for power with "little self-control, impulsiveness, emotional immaturity, dominance, and manipulativeness" (:1342).

The research determined that defensive, insecure behaviour is more likely when self-esteem is low. Further attributes found to be associated with the abuse of power are egocentrism, caring little for others, ethical insensitivity, a tendency to take risks as well as emotionalism. These motives and attributes are situated at the onset of the model, indicating that they are present at the onset of the process and initiate it.

2.5.3.2 Organisational conditions and power sources

Vredenburg and Brender (:1342) also found that certain organisational conditions further contribute to the abuse of power. In the model this is indicated by the conditions and sources that feed into the mainline like tributaries. Issues such as a lack of a clear decision-making structure in the organisation will result in each individual making individual decisions. Uncertainty in the work processes and the goals that they are meant to achieve also influence the abusive process. Further contributing conditions are a culture of secrecy in the organisation as opposed to transparency. Performance pressure from the management level can also contribute to the abuse of power.

According to Vredenburg and Brender's (:1343) model, there are four main sources of power that contribute to the abuse of power. The first source of power is the structural position (hierarchical authority) that a leader holds. The position that a leader is placed in can, in certain situations, lead him/her to control others and to become insensitive to what the subordinates are expressing. A decrease in sensitivity to subordinates' conditions and preferences leads to a decrease in the perceived value of the subordinates.

The second is the issue of who controls the resources. If structures are weak, resources or the lack of them can influence the abusive process. Thirdly, an individual's personal appeal can play a role in how s/he exerts power, and, lastly, events from the past that have not been dealt with can be used by leaders to influence others in a negative manner.

It is interesting to note that these sources of power are related to some of French and Raven's power bases: structural position is related to the coercive and legitimate power bases. The control of resources is related to the expert and informational power bases. The personal appeal is related to the referent power base, and the events from the past can be related to the reward power base in that the past can be used in order to reward or punish people according to what they may or may not have done.

2.5.3.3 Decisions, strategies and outcomes

The powerholders' motives and attributes set the process in motion, and the organisational conditions and power sources contribute to the process. The model shows that the next step in the process of abuse is decision making regarding the abuse. There appear to be leaders who actually calculate the risk of abusing their power in an organisation. Submissive and obedient followers reduce the risk level for these types of leaders. Organisational norms could curb the extent to which leaders could become abusive.

Having made a decision to exercise power in an abusive manner, the leader has a choice of strategies that s/he can apply. The strategy selection is dependent on the motives,

attributes, power sources, organisational conditions, the norms and the subordinate's attributes. The strategy could involve "direct pressure, upward appeal, exchange, ingratiation and inspiration" (Vredenburg & Brender 1998:1343). These strategies involve direct interaction with the subject. Indirect interaction with the subject could involve a lack of justice in rewards or the inappropriate sharing of information with other colleagues.

The outcomes of the abusive exercise of power are found at the end of the process. They can be unintended (for example, changes in respect or trust), as well as intended (for example, the abusive objectives and intentions are carried out and the victim is removed).

Vredenburg and Brender's model is a valuable tool that provides an objective overview of the contributing aspects that feed into the process of abuse. In this dissertation the process model of hierarchical abuse should not be interpreted as an argument to minimize the importance of structures and hierarchies and to weigh in on purely relational leadership. Kiechle (2005:15) stresses the importance of structures in organisations by stating that power structures are basically good in that they set rules as to how power should be exercised. In order to prevent abuse, power must be structured and controlled. If this does not happen, no one takes on the responsibility for how power is being used. Kiechle claims that poor structures lead to corruption, which leads to injustice and abuse.

2.6 Aspects that define abusive leaders

After looking at the structures in organisations and how the structural components contribute to the abuse of power, this subsection of the theoretical research focuses in on the persons – the abusive leaders.

The story is told that an airline co-pilot is granted a promotion to captain after passing all aptitude and training tests. His colleagues present him with a card with their signatures and a note: "Stay the way you are". Evidently others who had been promoted in the company changed and succumbed to the temptation of the new sense of empowerment they felt in their leadership position as captain. Coleman sums it up in this way:

Every legitimate power succumbs to the temptation to expand power beyond its legitimate spheres ... every form of empirical legitimate power is inherently instable since insecurity, interest, and special perspective will tempt the holders of it to move beyond legitimate power to an exercise of *more* power not within their domain and right (Coleman 1997:39).

This quote from Coleman suggests that an insecure leader who has his/her personal interests and perspectives in mind will be tempted to become abusive. What are the main temptations that a leader struggles with? Which factors of leadership are conducive to abuse of power? As Osmer (2008) would ask: Why is this (abuse of power) happening? The

following section addresses aspects that define abusive leaders in an attempt to find answers to these questions: the temptations that leaders face, moral character, personality disorders, power seekers, lack of clarity and insecurity.

2.6.1 Temptations

Whereas Coleman (1997) says that leaders will be tempted by insecurity, interest, and special perspective, Henri Nouwen (1989:23) states that leaders face the temptation to be relevant, spectacular and powerful, using the temptations of Jesus as presented in Matthew 4:1-11 as an example. These are significant not only for the topic of ethical leadership, but also for the issue of abuse. Depending on whether or not a leader falls into the temptation to be relevant, spectacular or powerful will have an effect on whether the leadership will be perceived as ethical or abusive.

2.6.1.1 The temptation to be relevant

Nouwen refers to the first temptation that Jesus faced as recorded in Matthew 4. After fasting 40 days and 40 nights, Jesus was hungry (!) and he was tempted by Satan to turn the stones into bread, should he be the Son of God. Nouwen calls this the temptation to be relevant: to be popular rather than to do what is right. He says that:

The leaders of the future will be those who dare to claim their irrelevance in the contemporary world as a divine vocation that allows them to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success, and to bring the light of Jesus there (Nouwen 1989:35).

Nouwen explains that Christian leaders may feel that they are irrelevant in our secular society, and join their contemporaries in what they think is making a greater contribution to society, while the seemingly self-confident world is crying for love (The temptation of Jesus to turn stones into bread). Leaders must be rooted in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, in addition to having well-informed opinions about the burning issues at hand. He states that if leaders are rooted in prayer “it will be possible to remain flexible without being relativistic, convinced without being rigid, willing to confront without being offensive, gentle and forgiving without being soft, and true witnesses without being manipulative” (:46-47).

Falling into the temptation to be relevant can result in leaders making decisions on the basis of what one assumes would make him/her popular, rather than on the basis of what is right and good for the people and the organisation. This can result in a loss of the unity in the organisation, and create instability because the leader fails to give the organisation a clear mandate on the basis of inner conviction.

2.6.1.2 The temptation to be spectacular:

The second temptation that Nouwen refers to in Matthew 4 is Satan challenging Jesus to throw himself down from the parapet and letting the angels catch him – the temptation to be spectacular. Nouwen observes that: “Stardom and individual heroism, which are such obvious aspects of our competitive society, are not at all alien to the church. There too the dominant image is that of the self-made man or woman who can do it alone” (:56). He warns against individualism in leadership, doing everything yourself and not being accountable to others, in other words, ministry is communal. Janis and Wesley Balda (2013) write about the problem of celebrity, which occurs when a leader receives compliments to the point of gaining a false sense of importance and accomplishment: leadership is exercised “through an increasingly assumed (and artificial) credibility” (Balda & Balda 2013:38). Accountability keeps this tendency in check. “Celebrity without community is toxic” (:39) and community provides the necessary accountability to prevent toxicity.

This temptation is associated with the third level of power development that Whitehead & Whitehead (2000) define as discussed in subsection 2.2.2. The experience of success and confirmation can result in leaders claiming that success for their own, ignoring the contribution of the entire team: replacing the “we” with “I”. It can lead to an intolerance of the ideas of others and desiring to stand in the limelight as a leader and receiving the credit for all successes.

2.6.1.3. The temptation to be powerful:

Nouwen refers to the third temptation in Matthew 4 in which Satan tempts Jesus to bow down to him in order to receive all the kingdoms of the world: the temptation to be powerful.

What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life (:77).

Nouwen claims that many Christian leaders do not know how to develop healthy, close relationships and choose power and control instead. Thinking with the mind of Christ, identifying and contemplating on how God works in the world, and being led deeper into a consciousness of God’s guidance allows leaders to reflect on their leadership in a critical manner. This requires deep spiritual formation of the whole person – body, mind and heart.

Kessler’s (2010) ethical guidelines for power (subsection 2.4) support Nouwen’s admonishing words on the temptation to be powerful, seeking it as an end, rather than a means to an end. It is important to realise that power is a gift from God and requires accountability to Him and to others. Jesus underlined this in his final response to Satan: We

are to worship the Lord our God and serve Him only. The focus is not on using power for personal gain but to glorify God.

2.6.2 Moral character

A further important aspect that defines Christian leaders is moral character. There may be a tendency to assume that certain personality types tend to be more abusive than others, especially if a leader has a dominant personality. However, Kessler and Kessler (2017:58-59) claim that the abuse of power and authority cannot be assigned only to the dominant personality. A conscientious person can become abusive and controlling (often indirectly), acting on the need to ensure the welfare of the organisation, just as the influential leader can control others through persuasive strengths, demanding their attention. The steady leader can control others through resisting change due to the need for a high level of security. The decisive factor is the issue of motive that determines whether the leader allows his/her personality and character to be transformed, and whether the result is to do what is good and right, or to harm others.

Using Diotrophes in 3 John as an example, Kessler and Kessler (2017:24) point out some of the characteristics of a person who is abusive. Diotrophes was an influential person in the church who misused his position to boost his person and implement his will: He “wants to be first”. This resulted in people being denied access to the church, being expelled from the church, as well as gossiping maliciously about the author of the letter (who introduces himself as the “elder”), resulting in a lack of trust. From this case study it becomes evident that an abusive leader creates restlessness in the organisation, is looking for attention, and is often a determinative loner.⁵ S/he does not accept criticism or correction, gossips about others who question him/her, undermining trust amongst the people, prepared to create divisions by finding support within the group. The abusive leader attempts to make the “support team” dependent, often making others feel guilty if they do not perform as desired. This person is known to change decisions made in the past without consulting others. S/he is not prepared to listen to reminders from critics. Anyone who may seem dangerous to the powerplayer is removed. S/he lies or twists the truth, down-plays issues, puts others down, tries to force others to trust him/her, claiming to be in a position of authority by God, and accusing others of being abusive.

This description of the moral character of an abusive leader (what is going on) is contrasted in chapter two subsections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.2.1, where ethical Christian leadership, what constitutes an ethical Christian leader and spiritual transformation are

⁵ Lovas (2013:39) refers to this as boredom. This person is bored in a peaceful, harmonious environment where the fruit of the Spirit is evident in the group. The goal is to stir up the group and stand in the limelight and gain attention. Thus, the boredom is exchanged for power.

discussed (what should be going on). As stated in this section, moral character is more significant than personality, and it became clear that any personality found in a leader can be used to do good or to bring harm. However, personality disorders in leaders can result in abusive behaviour.

2.6.3 Personality disorders

Kets de Vries determined that a surprising percentage of leaders have some sort of personality disorder and that a leader's mental health has a direct and major impact on the morale and structure of the working environment. "Toxic leaders create unhappy workplaces" (de Vries 2015: 2). In extreme situations, the leaders may exhibit common personality disorders, and it is important to be able to identify the symptoms of the four most frequently identifiable disorders in leaders.

1. If the leader has a passive-aggressive disorder s/he is afraid to assert him/herself, avoids confrontation and is covertly aggressive. The person tends "to use procrastination, inefficiency and forgetfulness to avoid fulfilling obligations" (de Vries 2015: 4).
2. The emotionally disconnected or alexithymic leader "finds it difficult to understand the emotions of others and can fear these emotions" (:4), portraying undeveloped communication skills and physical symptoms such as headaches, tension and stomach problems.
3. "Narcissists are usually charming and seductive characters ... are prone to rash, self-aggrandising decisions ... divide the world into those who are either for or against them, casting the latter as villains" (deVries 2015:3).
4. The leader with a bipolar disorder seems to have no emotional equilibrium. Because of their mood swings, their colleagues tend to have the impression they are constantly putting out emotional flare-ups. On the other hand, when they are on a high, they can draw others through their enthusiasm and winsome personality.

I think that these four personality disorders present one of the most complex aspects that define abusive leaders. The personality disorders become more complex when one considers the role that a person's childhood plays; often they are intertwined with the development of personality. It is difficult to approach a leader with the suggestion or accusation that the symptoms have been identified. At the same time, the presence of these personality disorders in leaders, and the unrecognised and therefore unresolved negative effects of their past, can result in disruption in organisations and irreparable damage in the victims.

2.6.4 Powerseekers

In subsection 2.4 on ethics and power, it is stated that a leader should “never strive for power as an end in itself” (Kessler 2010:548). The powerseeker is one who practices the opposite of this ethical guideline. Edin Lovas (2013:16), the Norwegian missionary, preacher and founder of the Retreat Center Sandom and author of the book *Wölfe im Schafspelz: Machtmenschen in der Gemeinde* further describes these *Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing* as being obsessed with the need to dominate. Powerseekers are characterised in the following ways.

First of all, they are generally intelligent, winsome, and can be friendly, charming and flattering. Secondly, according to James 3:16 (:16-17) these people are guilty of envy, selfishness and false ambitions leading to strife and disorder. Powerseekers desire to be seen in important places, to be honoured and greeted, as Jesus described the Pharisees in Matthew 23:5-7. Furthermore, the power-seeking leader has an aggressive mindset to the point of having one-sided, imbalanced opinions, blocking the supposed opponent, reducing self-confidence and self-esteem.

Lovas also claims that “powerseekers are dangerous for churches when it comes to financial issues” (Lovas 2013:34).⁶ They are good speakers and debaters and can be convincing on issues, leading to bad decisions that involve finances. Furthermore, Lovas describes the powerseeker as having unrealistic expectations from those around them, making people feel guilty if they do not fulfil these unrealistic, ever changing expectations. Finally, they may misinterpret the Bible according to their needs.

The previous subsections that discuss the aspects that define abusive leaders focus on the abusive leaders as individuals facing temptations, struggling in moral character, perhaps exhibiting personality disorders and seeking power. The next two aspects that define abusive leaders focus more on the organisational aspects that result in leaders abusing their power: a lack of clarity in the organisation and insecurity.

2.6.5 Lack of clarity

In John Stackhouse’s article on *Misplaced metaphors muddling mission*, he poses the question: “Why do people who are fully capable professionals become weirdly dysfunctional when they participate in a Christian ministry?” (Stackhouse 2015:62). He claims that, whereas businesses have a clear mandate and the employees have a fairly clear concept as to why they are there, people come to Christian organisations for a variety of reasons and different goals. Christian organisations are so complex that they become dysfunctional, lacking clarity and a

⁶ Translation from German to English: In Geldangelegenheiten sind Machtmenschen lebensgefährlich für Gemeinden und Kirchen.

sense of common goals and purpose. Hay (2012:2) claims that “Positive relationships abound around a strong sense of connection to the core mission”.

The challenge that Christian organisations face lies in a leader having the capability and capacity to hear and understand the reasons and goals that the colleagues have for joining the organisation and to clearly formulate and communicate the mandate so that all have a clear concept as to the direction the organisation is moving and how the goals will be reached. Subsection 3.4 discusses Christian leadership in multicultural teams and explains the necessity for leaders to develop a healthy third culture (an organisational culture), drawing from all colleagues in the organisation.

2.6.6 Insecurity

Insecurity is a further organisation-related aspect that relates to abusive leadership. Floyd McClung, Jr. (1988), the Executive Director of International Operations with Youth With a Mission, addresses the sensitive issue of the use and abuse of authority in Christian organisations. He states that it is important for organisations to be aware that “good but sometimes immature leaders can respond to selfish or needy people with overbearing authority, and ... cult figures can have so much influence on unwary young people, it is important to be aware of some of the unhealthy extremes leaders can go to in exercising their authority” (McClung 1988:1). He lists examples such as not feeling a need for accountability or submission, exalting themselves as authority figures (to a point that God never intended).

Although we should point out abuses of authority, we should also recognize that becoming a wise leader requires years of experience, experience which includes mistakes and failures. Scripture gives many examples of failure on the part of those who went on to be greatly used by God, including Moses, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, Peter, Paul, and many others (:5).

In an article “10 Signs A Leader Is Insecure” (2016), Christian psychologist, Dr Evan Parks, links insecurity in a leader to misusing the authority that s/he has. The leader may present him/herself as being confident and sure, and is usually loving, helpful and good-natured. However, because of the insecurity the person feels easily threatened, is sensitive to criticism, and does not like to be questioned about the decisions that s/he makes. As a result, the leader makes the lives of others difficult and is inflexible in solving problems. The leader makes hard decisions, does not allow others to contribute, and will even decide to close effective programs. The abuse is further evident by attempting to control every aspect of the organisation, not allowing others to run their own departments. Parks (2016) observes that healthy leaders expect problems and can solve them, but an insecure leader will become angry when confronted with problems and setbacks. This is due to the fact that the insecure leader needs to be successful and be legitimized by others.

The problem in the issue of insecurity lies in the fact that organisations may fill leadership positions with persons who feel insecure because of a lack of experience and/or training in leadership. The leaders may even lack the leadership gifts. These issues lead to insecurity and the resulting reaction described in this subsection.

The aspects that define abusive leaders that I have discussed (Nouwen's thoughts on the temptations of leaders, moral character, personality disorders, powerseekers, lack of clarity, and insecurity) help to create a clear description of how one could identify a leader who abuses his/her power. Not all attributes can be found in one specific leader or organisation. However, it is necessary to identify patterns in leaders in order to identify the abuse of power in the early stages of abusive processes.

2.7 Aspects that define the victims of abuse

The discussion on aspects that define the victims is introduced with a story that illustrates some of the issues that are subsequently discussed in this subsection. This is followed by a summary of eight factors that contribute to abuse, especially in Christian organisations according to Kessler and Kessler (2017).

A missionary returns from a foreign post where he has served for over 20 years. Upon returning home, he is incapable of meeting people and uses what little energy he has to master the basic routines in his daily life. The doctor diagnoses the condition as burnout and depression, prescribing anti-depressants to provide the person with a level of mental stamina that will allow him to begin therapy with a psychologist. The cause of his condition is linked to a leader in the mission's main office in the foreign country who recognized the strengths, capabilities and conscientiousness of this colleague. In addition to the responsibilities of resolving the bookkeeping catastrophe, he was continuously assigned new tasks by the leader until he experienced a mental, emotional and physical deficit.

Upon the missionary's return, the leader of the sending mission branch in his home country offers him to take the time he needs to recover, allowing him to work the amount of hours that he is able to, depending on his health status. He gives him the support he needs to recover over a period of three years.

In reflecting on the situation, the missionary says that his overseas authority was not solely responsible for the abuse. The missionary himself was also responsible for allowing the situation to develop to the point of having to leave his foreign assignment. He says he should have stood up to the leader and refused to take on more responsibilities than was humanly and personally possible.

2.7.1 Who is most susceptible to become a victim?

First of all, it takes two sides to set up a power-system: the abuser and the victims who allow themselves to be misused. Rather than risking the resistance and rejection in reproaching an abusive leader, the victims often choose to suffer or leave. This is evident in the above illustration, and the missionary realised much too late that he also had the option to reflect on the situation and refuse any further responsibilities.

A second aspect lies in the fact that people who are employed in Christian organisations tend to have high expectations of their leaders and the values that they express through their words and actions. As a result, abuse in these organisations is even more shocking and devastating for the employees, as it is coupled with deep disappointment. These high expectations are coupled with a sense of respect and trust in the leaders, and, as in the illustration, if the potential victim is conscientious, s/he may not trust him/herself to question the leader, choosing to submit to the leader.

Thirdly, personality and character traits define the victims of abuse. Kessler and Kessler (2017:81) claim that whether or not a person becomes a victim is dependent on the personality of the person. Some become victims after being facilitators of the power system, and the decisive factor is the level of suffering that takes place. At the same time, prevalent personality traits are recognizable. For example, people who developed a lifestyle of powerlessness learnt in early childhood allow others to dominate them. Unfortunately their submissiveness and the need for harmony, the guilt feelings and inferiority complex can be quickly identified by powerseekers. These people show tendencies to be sensitive, requiring confirmation, as these victims are concerned about what people think about them. (The above story underlines the aspect of submissiveness, the need for harmony and the guilt feelings in the missionary). Devotedness to the leader resulting in the abused being willing to be hurt while supporting the powerseeker, a willingness to sacrifice one's own needs and to suffer and protect the leader are further aspects of personality and character that nourish an abusive system. The victims may be dramatic people who live according to their feelings and relationships. They are easily manipulated by praise, or withholding praise.

Having identified the aspects that define abusive leaders and the victims of abuse, it is helpful to understand why it is so easy for abusive constellations to develop in Christian organisations.

2.7.2 Eight reasons for powerseekers' influence

Kessler and Kessler (2017) determined the following eight reasons why it is so easy for powerseekers to be influential, especially in Christian organisations:

1. Spiritual leaders have power and wherever there is power there is the potential for abuse.
2. Some Christians do not believe that abuse can take place in Christian organisations.
3. Abuse does not fit into the moral Christian standards, resulting in the ignoring of any abusive situations.
4. Many Christians have a view of humility that is conducive to abuse.
5. Christians have an exaggerated need for harmony, resulting in difficulties in problem solving.
6. Leadership structures in many Christian organisations are not clearly defined.
7. Leaders in Christian organisations can claim the spiritual authority given to them by God, and can therefore not be questioned.
8. Christian organisations attract unstable personalities looking for leaders that they can look up to, resulting in unwanted abuse (Kessler & Kessler 2017: 41-42).⁷

It is important to underline the main reasons that directly relate to victims and the reasons why they allow themselves to be abused, especially in Christian organisations. First of all, if Christians do not believe that abuse can take place in Christian organisations, it will be easier to fall into the trap of a powerseeker and to fail to identify that an abusive process has begun. This is closely linked to the fact that abuse and moral Christian standards do not fit together, again, resulting in ignoring or not recognizing abusive processes. Christians may have the view that humility means that one does not question the leader. This may also be linked to the next reason, in that Christians need harmony and avoid conflicts that result when addressing an abusive leader. If people in organisations have unstable personalities, they will seek to be devoted to the leader. A powerseeker would readily take advantage of this type of person.

Although it is not likely that all of these reasons and all the aspects that define victims of abuse would be evident in one individual incident of the abuse of power in a Christian organisation, patterns can be recognized. It reveals the necessity for leaders and their colleagues to become aware of the pitfalls and weaknesses that nourish the processes of the abuse of power in Christian organisations.

2.8 The effects of the abuse of power

When power is abused in Christian organisations, people are personally affected, even psychologically wounded. Organisations also suffer short- and long-term effects during and following an abusive process. Leaders of organisations must realize that there are personal and organisational results that need to be dealt with when power is abused. In subsection 2.8.1

⁷ Translated from German into English (Kessler & Kessler 2017:41-42).

below the personal effects of the abuse of power from David Johnson and Jeff van Vonderen (1991) are discussed. This is followed by subsection 2.8.2 that contains a brief discussion on the organisational results of the abuse of power.

2.8.1 Personal effects

People who have become victims of the abuse of power in Christian organisations suffer on a personal level. The following areas of struggle resulting from the abuse of power have been identified by David Johnson and Jeff van Vonderen (1991:41-50):

1. The victim develops a distorted image of God. This could result in feeling that God is never satisfied with what one achieves, is apathetic and does not help when people are hurt and abused and does not challenge the authority figure or organisation. As well, the victim may feel that God is powerless to help when people are abused and hurting.
2. The victim may be preoccupied with spiritual performance, which leads to anxiety and shame. "In spiritual systems where performance is more important than emotional honesty or human need, both extremes will be strongly in evidence" (Johnson & van Vonderen 1991:44).
3. The victim may have a distorted self-identity of him/herself as a Christian, a negative self-image or s/he may be confused with guilt and shame. The person has a negative identity as a Christian that can only be solved by good behavior.
4. The victim may have a problem relating to authority in a Christian organisation. The victim often develops methods to protect him/herself from further abuse, leading to compliance or defiance, both of which do not offer protection, according to the authors.
5. The victim may struggle with the concept of grace because of the shame s/he feels, leading to the sense of owing others when treated well.
6. The victim may struggle with setting personal boundaries when others demand responses and action from him/her. There is a feeling of shame for having an opinion and a struggle not to feel that one is selfish by wanting a right not to be abused.
7. The victim may have problems with personal responsibility because the person has experienced that no level of performance brings the desired, necessary and appropriate response and approval, leading to lethargy. At the same time, the victim may react in the other extreme and feel that he/she must resolve all problems and be responsible for every need or request.
8. The victim may lack living skills to be able to function outside of certain organisations or situations and is introverted and isolated.
9. The victim may have difficulty admitting the abuse, feeling that s/he is the problem, and exposing the abuse, even personally, creates feelings of disloyalty to the organisation. The

abuse begins to feel normal, and the victim fears that s/he is overreacting. Denial is a further factor, as the victim often cannot fathom that the abuse is actually taking place. When the victim is released from the abusive situation, s/he will see the situation more clearly (which leads to shame over having allowed oneself to be drawn into the situation).

10. The victim may have difficulty trusting again.

Mark Twain once mused, “A cat that sits on a hot stove lid won’t ever sit on a hot stove lid again. But it probably won’t sit on a cold stove lid either”. Those who have been spiritually abused will have a hard time trusting a spiritual system again. This is extremely significant, because the essence of living as a Christian is a trust relationship with God, within God’s family (:50).

To summarize the theme of these ten areas of struggle, it can be said that the victims can lose their trust in other Christians. They can also lose their trust in God, due to the fact that they feel that God did not resolve the problem and allowed abusive leaders to succeed in spite of the abusive behaviour. The victims can have feelings that swing between guilt for having allowed the abuse on the one hand, and, on the other hand, anger towards the perpetrator. The victim is in conflict, feeling a need to expose the abusive behavior in an organisation, but, on the other hand, feeling a sense of responsibility to protect the organisation. The victim feels like giving up and withdrawing, because of a feeling that no level of performance is sufficient. Finally, there is a struggle between complying and defying the system. This is truly a bleak description of a deeply wounded person.

Oakley (2013:68) claims that the abuse of power in Christian organisations has a long-term impact on individuals, due to the fact that there is a “lack of acceptance and recognition by others of the experience of it”. Christians may distance themselves from the victim because they feel uncomfortable with the stories. They have difficulty perceiving a Christian environment as unsafe. People are also unknowledgeable as to how to intervene and support the victims, and, as a result, the victims feel misunderstood and rejected.

2.8.2 Organisational effects

Organisations also suffer from the effects of abusive processes. During the theoretical research process, it became evident to me that the documentation on the personal effects of the abuse of power in Christian organisations outweighs the documentation on the effects that the abuse of power has on organisations. Vredenburg and Brender’s (1998) model (subsection 2.5.3) clearly portrays the process of the abuse of power in an organisational, hierarchical structure. John Stackhouse (2015) refers to the uniqueness of Christian organisations (subsection 2.6.5).

Drawing from my experience with organisations that have had issues with the abuse of power, I will briefly list the effects that I have observed. One of the tragic effects of the abuse

of power is the attrition of valuable workers. This has far-reaching results because skills and organisational knowledge are lost when people leave. If the perpetrators are not removed, the organisation experiences repeated cycles of the abusive process, attrition and tension in the organisation. This has far-reaching results because time and energy are utilised for the wrong issues. This results in financial slumps due to the fact that the contact with donors and friends of the organisation is less intense. The organisational focus is distorted and there is a lack of clarity within and outside the organisation.

The empirical research is valuable to provide further inputs from the research participants on this subject. In chapter six the research question (4.20) and the analysis will shed light on this issue. “What do you believe to be the organisational results of the abuse of power?”

The personal and organisational effects of the abuse of power in Christian organisations present challenges for healing processes and can leave permanent scars. Experiencing abusive behaviour influences the victim’s spiritual condition and hinders the effectiveness of the organisation.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter began by defining power and authority, explaining the decision to use the term “power” in this dissertation. The five faces of power and how power develops in an individual (Whitehead and Whitehead 2003) as well as French and Raven’s power bases (1959) developed the understanding of power. Seven ethical guidelines for exercising power as a Christian leader (Kessler 2010) concluded the discussion on power. This section of chapter two underlined the importance for leaders to reflect on the faces of power and the power bases, as well as to have a healthy power development together with integrating ethical guidelines. It also became clear that the faces of power and the power bases can be used effectively in leadership, but they can also be used in an abusive manner.

The chapter continued with a discussion on the abuse of power, answering the questions: “What is happening?” as well as “Why is it happening?” The abuse of power was defined and the types of abuse were explained. Vredenburg and Brender’s (1998) model of the hierarchical abuse of power in organisations that is based on their research provided an overview of how the factors (powerholders’ motives and attributes, activating conditions, and sources) contribute to the abusive process.

The chapter moved on to focus on the individual leaders and victims, describing the aspects that define abusive leaders: the temptations that they face (Nouwen 1989), moral character (Kessler & Kessler 2017), their personality disorders (de Vries 2015), powerseekers

(Lovas 2013), lack of clarity (Stackhouse 2015), and insecurity (McClung 1988). Although not all of these aspects can be found in one abusive leader, discussing these aspects is beneficial for increasing the awareness of how abuse of power can be identified, especially since different leaders will exhibit varying aspects.

The victims were the next topic of discussion in this chapter. The susceptibility of certain personalities and character such as powerlessness, an inferiority complex, submissiveness, or even dramatic people who live according to their feelings and relationships and are easily manipulated are some of these aspects. These are further underlined by Kessler and Kessler's (2004) reasons why it is so easy for powerseekers to be influential, especially in Christian organisations.

The chapter closed with a subsection on the personal (Johnson & van Vonderen 1991) and organisational effects of the abuse of power. The personal wounds result in a lack of trust in God and other Christians. The emotions of guilt, anger, inner conflict, withdrawal and incompetence are examples of the struggle and pain that the victims experience.

In chapter two the question: "What is happening" has been answered. Chapter three addresses the question: "What should be happening?" in relationship to ethical Christian leadership.

Chapter three: ethical Christian leadership

Chapter three is devoted to the theoretical research that answers the question posed by Osmer's normative task: "What should be going on?" Leadership (Kruse 2013, De Pree 2003 and Northouse 2016) and Christian leadership are defined, followed by an explanation of the aspects relevant to ethical Christian leadership: spiritual transformation (Kretzschmar (2006), love (Kessler 2012), servant leadership, accountability, and trust and forgiveness (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003). The above-mentioned authors and others have contributed to the topic of ethical Christian leadership. In contrast to chapter two where the abuse of power was considered, here the aspects of ethical Christian leadership that are vital for the prevention of the abuse of power in Christian organisations are explained. This chapter concludes with a discussion on leadership of multicultural teams in Christian organisations, drawing from Plueddemann (2009) and Lingenfelter (2008).

3.1 Leadership

In his article in the April 9, 2013 edition of *Forbes Magazine*, Kevin Kruse attempts to define leadership. He quotes the definitions of respected professionals, beginning with Peter Drucker, who claims that a leader is someone who has followers. Warren Bennis says: "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." Bill Gates claims: "As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others". John Maxwell writes: "Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less". After carefully analysing these definitions, Kruse defines leadership as "a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, toward the achievement of a goal" (Kruse 2013:1). I consider Kruse's definition fitting for good leadership, but would pose the question: What if the efforts of others are not maximised and/or the goal is not reached – is that no longer leadership? Furthermore, who will define whether the efforts of others are maximized or not? What if the wrong goals are pursued?

DePree (2004) complements the definition by saying that leadership "is an art, something to be learned over time, not simply by reading books. Leadership is more tribal than scientific, more a weaving of relationships than an amassing of information" (DePree 2004:2). The art of leadership means "liberating people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible" (:1), and that "to be a leader means, especially, having the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who permit leaders to lead" (:22).

Peter Northouse's concise definition of leadership is most appropriate for this dissertation. He defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of

individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse 2016:6). Northouse’s definition underlines four components of leadership: Process, influence, groups and common goals. Leadership as a process is a transaction that occurs between the leader and the followers, resulting in interaction rather than a linear process.⁸ Thus, everyone participates in the leadership process. Leadership as an influence has to do with how the leader affects followers, and is crucial in order for leadership to take place. The third component of leadership is groups, and without groups that have a common purpose, independent of the size, leadership cannot take place. The fourth component is having common goals to achieve. Northouse explains that this fourth component of mutuality “lessens the possibility that leaders might act toward followers in ways that are forced or unethical” (:6). He continues to say that “leaders have an ethical responsibility to attend to the needs and concerns of followers” (:7). They are not above the followers, nor are they better. The key to Northouse’s approach to leadership lies in an understanding between leaders and followers in “leadership relation” (:7) to each other.

3.2 Christian leadership

In studying the literature on leadership in general, it becomes evident that there are commonalities of principles in the secular and the ethical Christian environments. However, the following subsection will focus on Christian leadership (see Plueddemann 2009 below). As stated in subsection 1.4.3, I have chosen the following five aspects that constitute a Christian leader: spiritual transformation (the need to be in a process of spiritual growth and change), love (that should permeate every area of life), servant leadership (the attitude toward work and people), accountability (the sense of responsibility that one has for his/her actions and decisions), and trust and forgiveness (what should happen to prevent abusive situations and what should happen if it goes wrong).

These five topics are significant in the literature and are relevant for ethical Christian leadership and the abuse of power in Christian organisations.

3.2.1 Ethics in Christian leadership

“Ethics is critical reflection on the moral norms, values and behaviour of individuals and societies in order to assess their validity ... an analysis of and a deliberate reflection on moral judgments, actions and lifestyle” (Kretzschmar 2009:16). Christian ethics reflects on questions relating to a good life, a good person, what is the right, good and wise way to live, how we live with others and react to issues in the world. Applied to the framework of

⁸ W.J. Wessels (2010) takes this interaction a step further, stating that leadership “has to do with connecting with people and communicating with them on a deep level ... It is much more than good communication; it is leadership that connects with followers on a deep level of understanding. It is leadership which shows maturity and sincerity” (Wessels 2010: 485).

leadership, one could ask “What is an ethical leader?”; “What is the right, good and wise way to lead?”; “How do we work with others and react to issues in the organisation?”

Plueddemann (2009:15) defines good, ethical Christian leaders: “Good leaders are fervent disciples of Jesus Christ, gifted by the Holy Spirit, with a passion to bring glory to God. They use their gift of leadership by taking the initiative to focus, harmonize and enhance the gifts of others for the sake of developing people and cultivating the kingdom of God”. Whereas “leaders are people who are able to inspire, encourage and guide others” (Kretzschmar 2006:47), ethical leaders are “trustworthy persons of integrity and competence who encourage and enable others to develop moral character and achieve goals that are just and good” (:47).

In chapter 2 (subsection 2.5.3) Vredenburg and Brender’s (1998) model of the hierarchical abuse of power was presented. With regard to their model, they explain the ethics of hierarchical power, the first issue being the importance of respecting a subordinate’s human dignity, that people are valuable in themselves. A further ethical criterion is that of an individual’s rights to privacy, truthfulness and safety. Thirdly, organisations are endowed with power from society in return for their contributions to the good of society, expecting that the organisations will follow the community’s norms and laws. Lastly, preventing deserved rewards violates the ethics of fairness or justice.

After considering these descriptions and definitions of ethical Christian leadership it is possible to focus on what constitutes ethical Christian leadership.

3.2.2 What constitutes an ethical Christian leader?

Ralph Schubert (2008) carried out a Christian-ethical dialogue between Western and Tanzanian Christians to determine how they would prioritize five ethical values that both groups agreed are important for Christian leaders to practise. Although both groups could identify with the same values, the two groups prioritized the values in an almost perfect mirror image.

Table 3.1 Prioritised Values of Both Groups

WEST	TANZANIA
1. Justice	1. Love
2. Faithfulness	2. Mercy
3. Humility	3. Humility
4. Love	4. Faithfulness
5. Mercy	5. Justice

(Schubert 2008:183)

Schubert determined that “biblical values are strongly influenced by cultural values” (:184). In the individualistic western society, justice and faithfulness are highly valued, whereas in the communalistic, people-centred society in Tanzania, love and mercy are highly

valued. Schubert also determined that the expression of each of the values is dependent on the cultural background of the individuals in the organisation. Thus, it becomes challenging to lay out biblical values for ethical leadership that are understood and practised by all individuals within and between cultures.

The five ethical values that are listed in Table 3.1 are values related to inner character. Although many of the values that one would expect would define an ethical Christian leader are intertwined with each other, I have chosen to focus on the values that relate not only to inner character, but also to the practical expression of character (for example the importance of being a servant, being fair and the willingness to be accountable).

3.2.2.1 Spiritual transformation

Kretzschmar (2006) emphasises the importance of spiritual transformation in the lives of Christian leaders:

Spiritual formation is indispensable for Christian leaders first because it results in a wider vision of reality and a deepened engagement with society. Second, it enables leaders to live the spiritual and moral vision of the Christian gospel. Third, it helps them to avoid moral and other pitfalls. Fourth, it helps leaders to open the gate to truth, for example, within psychological and business management studies of leadership. Finally, spiritual formation enables leaders increasingly to discern good and evil in the world and to reflect on their own ministries with greater honesty and discernment (Kretzschmar 2006:3).

She goes on to state that the spiritual and moral maturity of leaders of Christian organisations cannot be over-emphasised. Personal transformation is a lifelong process that should take place as a result of an ongoing relationship with God, resulting in a change of thinking, living and leading. Spiritual formation is an inner journey (relationship with God and our true selves), a shared journey (in fellowship with other Christians), and an outer journey (reaching out to the world).

Anselm Grün (2006:13), a Benedictine Monk and financial administrator of a monastery, shares his experience on spiritual transformation in leaders. He believes that a leader must be prepared to change oneself. S/he must be self-reflective and capable of leading him/herself before being capable of leading others. Grün underlines the importance of integrating the virtues of humility, emotional self-control, fairness, decisiveness, modesty and frugality in one's lifestyle. This involves gaining wisdom through experience, becoming mature, giving up the fight for power and influence) and fearing God.

In considering the attributes that define abusive leaders as discussed in chapter two, spiritual transformation in the lives of Christian leaders stands in contrast to the attributes that define abusive leaders. It is to be expected that a leader who has the ability for self-reflection

and a desire to develop spiritually will be less tempted to abuse his/her power. This should result in fair and just treatment of all members in the team.

3.2.2.2 Love

Love is an important aspect of ethical Christian leadership. As seen in the chart in 3.2.2 above, both the Western and Tanzanian participants prioritized love as an essential value, but with different prioritisation. Kessler (2012) sets the foundation for the leadership principles⁹ by describing the twofold law of love from Mark 12:29-31, stating that, if love is the most important law for mankind, then love is also the most important law for Christian leaders.

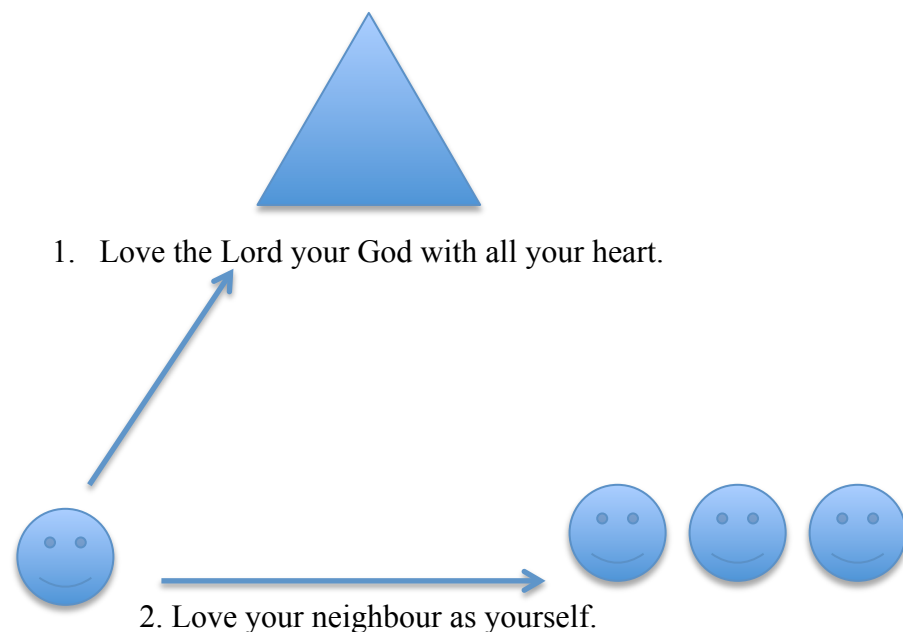


Figure 3.1 Twofold law of love (Taken from Kessler 2012:6)

The twofold law of love has a vertical dimension (loving God) and a horizontal dimension (loving others). Kessler makes it clear that this text does not say that we should love ourselves, but rather that it is assumed that if one loves him/herself in a normal, healthy, psychological manner, s/he will treat him/herself well, and should treat others in the same way. The twofold law of love is especially important for Christian leaders because they are role models for their followers. He defines a leader as a person whom others follow, and a Christian leader is one who consciously follows Christ, whether he leads in a Christian or secular organisation. Kessler continues to explain leadership and love: “A person should never be entrusted with a leadership position if s/he does not love the people s/he is leading” (:8).¹⁰ The twofold law of love becomes practical through the important principles of

⁹ Kessler (2012) lists four leadership principles from the Bible in his book *Vier Führungsprinzipien der Bibel: Dienst, Macht, Verantwortung und Vergebung*. They are service, power, accountability and forgiveness.

¹⁰ Translation from German to English: Man sollte einer Person niemals eine Führungsaufgabe anvertrauen, wenn sie die Menschen, die sie führen soll, nicht liebt.

leadership: service, power, accountability and forgiveness. Just as the twofold law of love has a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension, these principles also have vertical and horizontal dimensions.

- I serve God, and I serve others.
- I have received power from God, and I have power over others.
- I am accountable *to* God and *to* others, and I am accountable *for* others who I lead.
- I live from God's forgiveness, and I am willing to forgive those with whom I work.

The Tanzanian Christians that prioritised love in table 3.1 (subsection 3.2.2) would agree with Kessler (2012): love is the top ingredient that determines how all other values and principles of ethical Christian leaders are played out. The western Christian leaders prioritised justice (table 3.1). Love and justice (or fairness) cannot be separated: if a Christian leader truly loves those with whom s/he works, treating them justly and fairly should be a natural consequence.

3.2.2.3 Servant Leadership

A further aspect or value that should define ethical Christian leadership is service, as seen in Kessler's (2012) principles. Jesus addresses the topic of servant leadership, contrasting it with the attitude with which the rulers of that time lorded their authority over the Gentiles (Matthew 20:25-28). He makes it clear that those who want to lead must first be willing to serve and give their lives for others, treating others in a just, fair and equal manner.

The "Servant Leadership Model" was presented to the business world by Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990) in 1970 when he wrote an essay entitled "The Servant as Leader". The model emphasizes the importance of serving others (employees, customers, and community) as the top priority. "Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, a sense of community, and shared decision-making power" (Spears 1995: 3-4). Spears explains that Greenleaf's model teaches that a conscious decision to serve first results in an aspiration to lead and to see persons grow, become healthier, wiser, independent, and becoming servants themselves.

Stahlke and Laughlin (2003:Pos.233) say that Servant Leadership means exhibiting leadership that empowers and not overpowers, exchanging oppression for freedom to excel, and fear of failure for being encouraged to take risks and being allowed to learn from making mistakes. Kretzschmar (2002) underlines these thoughts by using Christ's example of servant leadership (Mk 10:35-45). "He taught with authority but was never authoritarian, he was compassionate but never ineffectual, he was just but never judgmental" (Kretzschmar 2002:42).

Kessler lists Servant Leadership as one of the most important principles of leadership. “A good Christian leader serves God first, then the organisation, and thirdly, the people in the organisation” (Kessler 2012:27)¹¹. Normally these three directions of service fit together. However, if there is conflict, the leader is first and foremost responsible to God, then to the organisational task, and lastly to the colleagues who are helping to fulfil the mandate. A servant leader’s mandate is more important than his/her position, and the priority should be to serve and not to lead. Servant leaders must be capable of leading themselves, which requires maturity and self-discipline. Servant leaders must be open for criticism and correction, and be good listeners.

Balda and Balda (2013) question the use of the term Servant Leadership, saying that it has become a cliché that many have enthusiastically adopted without giving it much thought, specifically the implications of being a servant: being a ransom for many as Jesus was. They refer to Peter Drucker and his assertions that the manager serves the institution, not the employees, customers or shareholders. At the same time, “the manager can generate performance through good leadership, ethical behavior and affirming relationships with followers and subordinates; but the priorities must never be confused” (Balda and Balda 2013:43). They conclude by suggesting that the “only true test for a so-called servant leader is a confidential reality check with the followers” (:43). Followers will readily assess the status of servanthood in their leaders. Northouse (2016:238) claims: “When individuals engage in servant leadership, it is likely to improve outcomes at the individual, organisation, and societal levels”.

3.2.2.4 Accountability

Although accountability is considered to be negative in the eyes of some leaders, it is an important aspect of ethical Christian leadership, as seen in the following quote. Richelle Wiseman quotes John Pellowe, CEO of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC): “What I feel acutely is that someday, as leader of a Christian organisation, I will be called into account not just for how I led the organisation, but also how I stewarded the people” (Wiseman 2015:33). Accountability is necessary to maintain values of ethical Christian leadership.

English literature tends to use the term “authority” in relationship to “accountability” with the intention of making leaders aware of the fact that they have been placed in positions and given the authority to use their power (independent of the base of that power) in their

¹¹ Own translation from German to English: Eine gute christliche Führungskraft dient erstens Gott, zweitens ihrer Organisation und drittens den Menschen innerhalb dieser Organisation.

given position. This position of given authority to exercise power demands accountability, not only to those who have given the leader the authority, but also to those subordinates for whom the leader is responsible and to God.

For example, Stahlke and Laughlin (2003) discuss accountability as an important and necessary factor that is closely connected to Servant Leadership. They say that accountability “welcomes giving and receiving objective evaluation of working relationships and performance of self and others” (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003: Pos.4329). Although the term accountability is actually neutral, it is often avoided because it is often thought of in negative terms.

Accountability has two purposes: 1) Monitoring: the authority and responsibility of a person or group and making necessary corrections. 2) Measuring: to determine whether or not the goals have been reached and standards were kept. Stahlke and Laughlin state: “We are always accountable to the person or group from whom our authority comes. We can delegate authority and we can delegate responsibility, but we can’t delegate accountability” (:Pos.1034). Accountability leads to affirmation for delivering the expected results. At the same time, accountability includes addressing and removing destructive and dysfunctional behaviour, which exposes or removes the abuser. A lack of accountability of the leadership to those above him/her in the structure, or within a board or committee can harm healthy working relationships and lead to abuse.

Kessler (2012:53) also underlines the necessity of accountability, and considers it to be one of the four main principles of leadership. Because human beings receive their authority from God, it is impossible to have authority without accountability for the use of this God-given authority. Thus, accountability should result in reduced abuse of this authority. Because power comes from God, leaders are first and foremost accountable to God. Secondly, they are accountable to those who have given them the authority to exert their power in their leadership position. Finally, leaders are accountable for the way in which their decisions and actions influence other people. Thus, accountability structures in an organisation should provide a platform for personal and interpersonal reflection that would reveal unfair or unjust behaviour by a leader.

Max Weber sheds further light on theories of sovereign authority, in which a ruler believes that s/he has received his/her authority directly from God, and is, therefore, “responsible only to God” (Coleman, S.J. 1997:34) and not to colleagues, boards, or even subordinates. This is a significant factor for the discussion of the abuse of power in Christian organisations. If a leader understands the line of accountability to be limited to God, and not

to others, and the leader falsely claims the actions and decisions to be a mandate from God, the followers will be intimidated and hesitant to question the leader, because in doing so, they are made to feel that they are questioning God.

3.2.2.5 Trust and forgiveness

The last aspect to be discussed in this subsection is a pair that cannot be separated: trust and forgiveness. Regarding trust, Covey (2013:Pos.785) states that no matter how good the rhetoric or intentions of a leader are, without trust there will not be a basis for success. “A key feature of effective leadership is the ability to be innovative in order to transform the group and steer it in new directions. Trust plays a central role in this process” (Hogg 2005:1245).

“Forgiveness is free, but trust is expensive” (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:Pos.1067). It is a value that is often misunderstood and mistaken for forgiveness, as trust must be earned by being found trustworthy on the basis of behaviour. One should be called to account for decisions and actions and be found trustworthy, but trust does not replace accountability. Trustworthiness leads to more trust. When the trust account carries a deficit, due to bad experiences, the result is a broken relationship that can only be rebuilt on behaviour worthy of trust, bringing the trust account in the positive. Trust is built on the basis of an accountability system through the negotiation of strategic and tactical goals, regular relationship reviews, documenting important communications, and replacing assumptions with agreements.

Regarding forgiveness, Kessler states that a Christian leader is one who is aware of the fact that s/he needs God’s forgiveness and his/her relationship to God is the basis for living (Kessler 2012:65). Leaders who are aware of this, and can deal with their sinful nature through forgiveness from Jesus Christ do not need to find another person to carry blame for their own actions. It is important in Christian organisations to build a culture of forgiveness, so that when things go wrong people will acknowledge, admit and confess their shortcomings, and be forgiven, rather than trying to cover up their mistakes. If a leader can admit to having done wrong, it will help to create a culture in which the workers will also be more willing to forgive each other. If a leader can receive forgiveness, s/he will have the tolerance that is necessary to understand and forgive others.

This subsection on Christian leadership focuses on the values that one would expect to observe in an ethical Christian leader. The values discussed are spiritual transformation, love, servant leadership, accountability, and trust and forgiveness. These values are as important in multicultural teams as in monocultural teams. The following subsection builds on these values, and explains the factors needed to form strong multicultural teams.

3.3 Christian leadership in multicultural teams

The final subsection in this chapter forms a bridge between chapter two on ethical Christian leadership and chapter four on leadership and culture. I illustrate the importance of these topics with a story, which is followed by four relevant factors from Lingenfelter (2008) and Plueddemann (2009) for creating and leading strong multicultural teams in Christian organisations.

We lived on a mission compound in Africa with ten families representing up to six different nationalities at any one time. We came from a variety of denominational church backgrounds from conservative Dutch Reformed to Mennonite to Evangelical Free to Pentecostal. Furthermore, we lived in close proximity to each other. We could hear who had guests, and sometimes what they were discussing, because the houses were not soundproof. The neighbour had a parrot whose imitations were a reflection and reminder of what was said within his hearing range. Work ethic, lifestyle and family ethic, including disciplining children on this compound formed a colorful fabric. This living and working situation held a potential for explosive team relationships. It was possible to live in this multicultural environment for two years and maintain work and living relationships. In reflecting on this experience, it was possible to find some answers to the question: How did it happen?

First of all, the team members had a vision and calling to be in the team, and we had a common goal: to support the church, aid organisations, the country and, most importantly, the people through aviation. Whether pilot, mechanic, bookkeeper, director, wives, children, etc. everyone was necessary to fulfil the mandate.

Secondly, we needed each other. We were each other's family, we needed the compound life for our security, we were each other's spiritual encouragement and support, and we helped each other. The pilots needed to trust the mechanics who made their airplanes airworthy. The bookkeeper had to be trusted by the program director to balance the finances and provide the information necessary to operate the program. The person booking the flights had to be trusted by all to coordinate the flight plans and passengers.

Thirdly, we focussed on what we had in common, rather than on the issues where we differed, especially regarding controversial theological issues.

Lastly, we prayed together regularly. I learned that it is important to pray regularly with the people that I serve with, and that, if I can pray with someone, I open the way to loving that person, even though I may not have chosen that person to be my best friend in my homeland. In praying and sharing with that person, I develop a sensitivity that helps me to learn about the person and why s/he behaves in a certain way.

This true story confirms and summarises the aspects of leading multicultural teams. The positive, effective team experience was possible through the leadership on this program because we had a common vision and we were all living from God's mercy, which meant we had the desire to live our relationships in love, respect and acceptance. We were open to the cultures and values of each other, and there was a high level of readiness for adaptability. These aspects were combined to build a high level of trust within the team.

The strong, multicultural constellation in this team made it possible not only to live and work together. It also provided a foundation and support group to cope with emergencies.

The effectiveness of an international team normally requires a high level of trust between its members. ... People who live and work in close proximity can be expected to share similar values, preferences, aspirations, taboos, customs, and social habits. They know each other. On the basis of these shared circumstances, they can build trust (or see it eroded) according to their day-to-day experience with each other. A multicultural group starts life together the other way around: they have dissimilar values and habits, and they communicate them in a variety of ways, so automatic initial trust is highly unlikely. Something has to be created before it can be either eroded or built on (Lewis 2012:264).

Plueddemann defines leading cross-culturally as “inspiring people who come from two or more cultural traditions to participate with you in building a community of trust, and then to follow you and be empowered by you to achieve a compelling vision of faith” (Plueddemann 2009:155).

Lingenfelter believes that the source of building this community is based on a clear calling and vision from God. “Without vision, the community loses its sense of purpose and direction. Without prayer, the community loses its humility, essential for trust, and its faith to step out together in action” (Lingenfelter 2008:42).

3.3.1 Building trust in multicultural teams

Based on his experience in Christian leadership in cross-cultural settings, Lingenfelter (2008) determined that, in order to build effective teams, there must be a willingness to learn and accept cultural behavior. This includes listening to each other with respect and acceptance. If this does not occur, disagreements result in judging and condemning the spirituality of others and destroying chances for effective team ministry. Without love, which results in patience, humility and compassion, it is difficult to form an effective team in a multicultural Christian organisation. “The true measure of effective leadership is whether the team does the hard work of loving one another in the midst of disagreement and then pulls together to accomplish the will and purpose of God” (Lingenfelter 2008:66).

Lingenfelter stresses the importance of covenant relationships with a high level of commitment to each other, based on a spiritual foundation that forms a common ground for

all cultures. As a believer, through God's mercy all have a new identity, character and calling; all have a common mission to glorify God, and all live by God's mercy and not from their own goodness. In principle, I agree with Lingenfelter. One must add that how individuals in various cultures perceive God's mercy, the mission to glorify God and how to live can also present challenges in building a strong foundation.

In order to build trust in multicultural teams in Christian organisations, it is important to build an understanding for the cultural differences that each team member brings into the team. This is made possible by finding the common spiritual ground and the common mission.

3.3.2 Building a third culture

From a practical standpoint, Plueddemann states that "there are no superior or inferior cultures or cultural approaches to leadership; there are only different approaches. No particular culture's approach is inherently bad or unbiblical, and no particular culture is completely biblical" (Plueddemann 2009:10). He contributes his growth as a Christian to leading cross-culturally, giving him the opportunity to evaluate his own cultural leadership norms and background. This resulted in drawing his own conclusions and adopting new attitudes and behaviours. I would describe it as becoming a third culture adult: forming a new culture that is a combination of the original culture and the newly experienced culture.

This process can be an individual one in which a person is willing to reflect and change. This process is also necessary for forming a new team culture in order to form strong multicultural teams.

3.3.3 Resolving leadership tensions

Plueddemann (2009:64) lays out three guidelines for resolving leadership tensions in multicultural teams. The leader must be willing to reflect on unconscious cultural values and not hold on to what one considered as the norm. The leader must be willing to discover the cultural values of others. Finally, Plueddemann explains how leaders in each culture explain scripture in the context of the culture through their cultural perspective. He challenges leaders to consciously discover universal principles of leadership rather than interpreting scripture to support their leadership style.

The complexity of this process becomes evident when considering the difference between cultural practices and cultural values (which are closely related to the world view of a culture). Cultural practices are the external expressions that we can experience through our sense of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. However, linked to these expressions are the values and cultural ideals that create the philosophy of life. Thus, the values are

“subconscious assumptions” (:71) (not observable) that affect how people act (observable). The leader’s willingness to reflect on these subconscious cultural values to determine the motivation behind the observed actions can reduce tensions in multicultural teams. “Globalization means people are looking more and more alike on the outside, but the inner layer of cultural values hasn’t changed very much” (:74).

3.3.4 Situational leadership

Pluedemann (2009) views situational leadership as an important asset for leading multicultural teams.¹² He states that multicultural leaders have to be flexible and adapt their leadership style according to the situation in which they find themselves. This does not mean that they compromise their Christian principles. However, it means adapting their approach. Four approaches are suggested (:153): 1) Participating with shared decision-making; 2) Selling by explaining decisions; 3) Delegating by turning over responsibility to others; and 4) Telling or being directive. Situational leadership demands the willingness to learn a high level of flexibility, adaptability, humility and sensitivity.

Leading monocultural teams in an ethical Christian manner is challenging. The challenges become more complex when a mixture of cultures enriches the team. The above factors are important for helping Christian leaders to build strong multicultural teams.

3.4 Conclusion

The normative task asks “What should be going on?” The theoretical research in this chapter on what one would expect from an ethical leader in a Christian organisation answers this question. Although the answer to this question has many facets, and it becomes clear in this chapter that spiritual transformation, reflecting on one’s own actions and relationship to God and others, being a servant leader who is willing to be accountable to God and to others in the organisation, as well as creating an organisational culture where forgiveness is practiced, and trust is strengthened are intertwined. Becoming and being a good, ethical leader in a Christian organisation is a lifestyle that encompasses all facets of a leader’s life, beginning with the relationship to God, permeating all relationships and areas of life.

It becomes evident that Christian leadership is a way of life, encompassing the leader’s growing relationship with God, with daily contacts, friends, colleagues and family, and with those beyond the cultural comfort zone. The principles of ethical Christian leadership apply cross-culturally, but it is important for the leader to reflect on these principles and values in

¹² Pluedemann (2009) uses the term “situational leadership” to describe the necessity of leading cross-culturally and adapting the leadership style to the cultural context. This term should not be confused to the Situational Leadership Model from Dr. Paul Hersey (n.d.), which focuses on a tool that enables leaders on all levels and in all areas to help them to analyse the amount of guidance and socioemotional support that s/he is required to give, as well as the readiness level that team members show in their responsibilities.

the cultural context in which one leads, and to help the followers in the team to reflect in order to develop a new team culture.

The section on leading multicultural teams connects the aspects of ethical Christian leadership with the following chapter. As stated in the above section, it is necessary to reflect and understand the values of the cultures to which one is exposed. In chapter four the Canadian, German and South African cultures are discussed and compared. Aspects of power and perception of abuse as discussed in chapter two will be integrated into the discussion.

This dissertation not only researches the abuse of power in Christian organisations. It also researches this topic in the light of the German, Canadian and South African cultures. Therefore, it is necessary to study leadership in the light of these three cultures, which is the purpose of chapter four.

Chapter four: Leadership and culture

Hofstede et al (2010) has said, “Managers and leaders, as well as the people they work with, are part of national societies. If we want to understand their behaviour, we have to understand their societies” (Hofstede et al 2010:25). This statement could be extrapolated to say that one must understand his/her *own* society in order to understand the society of other groups and to lead in multicultural societies. In our globalised world, it is difficult to find organisations that represent one cultural system. Understanding the differences and similarities of different cultures can assist in an understanding of each other’s behaviour, which should help to reduce abusive behaviour in multicultural teams.

Chapter four begins with a story from each of the three cultures that are considered in this dissertation (Canada, Germany and South Africa).¹³ The three short, true stories reflect typical traits of each of the cultures. This is followed by an explanation of the five dimensions of organisational cultures from Hofstede et al (2010). The chapter continues by comparing the three cultures in light of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, and by discussing facts and impressions that have been gathered through the detailed investigation of and encounter with the cultures. Lewis (2015), Schroll-Machl (2013), and Thomas and Scheuermeyer (2006) are resources that help to explain the leadership styles, team interaction, and work processes that could be expected in the respective cultures. Shahid Khan’s study (2014) on the impact that Hofstede’s cultural dimensions have on the subordinate’s perception of abusive leadership integrates the aspects of power and its abuse in various cultures. There is limited research material available on the effect that culture has on the perception of the abuse of power. The available research information has its sources in western cultures, and has not been carried out in a cultural comparison context, but rather with a focus on one specific culture. Therefore, Khan’s study is the single resource that I have included in the theoretical research relating to culture and the abuse of power.

For the discussion on communication and culture, I refer to the researcher Erin Meyer (2014) with her Culture Map. Although her research covers a broad spectrum of cultural aspects, for the purpose of this dissertation I have chosen to draw only on one main aspect: Communication, because communication plays a vital role in organisations. Low- and high-context communication is defined and a comparison between the respective cultures follows, based on Erin Meyer’s extensive work on communication patterns in countries around the

¹³ As stated in subsection 1.1, for the purpose of this dissertation, all cultural data and cultural references pertain to English-speaking Canadians, to Germans from former West-Germany and to white South Africans.

world. The discussion on communication is expanded with the cultural communication patterns from Richard Lewis (2015).

Finally, the theoretical research in this chapter draws on Robert J. House and Team (2004) with the Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory: a comparison of the cultures in the light of the cultural leadership dimensions established from the findings of the GLOBE study. The study is valuable for this dissertation because it shows that attributes of leaders in some cultures are considered to be positively outstanding, and, in other cultures are considered to hinder good leadership.

The chapter closes with the conclusions that can be drawn from the theoretical data relating to the Canadian, German and South African cultures.

4.1 Short stories from Canada, Germany and South Africa

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, it is important for leaders to reflect on and understand their own culture in order to understand people from other cultures. Although these stories may seem, at first sight, to be insignificant, on closer inspection they illustrate cultural aspects that the theoretical research on the leadership cultures describes.

4.1.1 Canada

Our daughter was born in Zimbabwe, was raised in Germany, and has a Canadian passport. My husband and I accompanied her when she entered Canada to begin her studies. As we proceeded through passport control, the Canadian officer questioned us about the purpose and duration of her entry into Canada. I explained to him lightly that our daughter would be studying in Canada, and that she would like to discover what it means to be Canadian. He answered lightly in return: “We are all trying to figure it out.” With that he stamped our passports and wished us well. At the moment, the exchange made us smile, but in reflecting on this exchange, I realise that, in spite of wondering what it really means to be a Canadian, we were both acting out our Canadian culture without being consciously aware of the dynamics of this short exchange: the friendly, relaxed and open conversation with a dash of humour.

4.1.2 Germany

After flying through the night from Canada to Frankfurt it was a challenge to maintain the proverbial Canadian politeness when standing in the long queue in front of Passport Control, especially if one arrives at the same time as a line of international flights arriving with non-European passport holders. I obediently joined the queue for the non-European passport holders, even though my passport confirmed my permanent residency in Germany. As I finally stepped up to the counter, the friendly, but business-like immigration officer studied

my passport and my residence permit, and asked me why I chose this queue and not the queue for EU-Passports. Next time I should take the more expedient queue through EU-Passports. He then added: “Just the same, it is nice to speak to someone who understands German.” I would not risk more than “Danke schön, das ist nett. Ich war mir immer unsicher, ob ich es darf.” (Thank-you, that is nice. I was never sure if I am allowed.) This exchange is a simple example of the friendly, but straightforward communication of the German culture.

4.1.3 South Africa

We drove into the city of Nelspruit, South Africa and had an appointment to fetch documents from a lawyer’s office. My husband and I drove into a quiet, shady side street lined with green foliage and towering trees. We found the lawyer’s office and parked on the parking lot in front of the building. Upon entering the quiet, plain, , elegant building we were met by a friendly, young, white South African woman sitting behind the reception desk. After exchanging relaxed greetings, she called “Annette”, with whom we had made the appointment. She appeared within minutes and we exchanged friendly greetings in a calm, relaxed atmosphere and were ushered into a room filled with a dark table that could have seated at least 25 people. One of the walls was lined with a straight row of pictures telling the history of the firm. We exchanged small talk about our drive from Johannesburg, a few details surrounding the document, shook hands and said Good-bye. The short exchange confirmed what Lewis says in his book “When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures” about English-speaking white South Africans: “calm, good planners, good manners, reserved” (Lewis 2015:215).

4.2 Hofstede: Five cultural dimensions

On the basis of a comprehensive research involving 160,000 managers and employees from 53 countries, Hofstede developed five cultural dimensions, focusing on attitudes and values of individuals around the world. He carried out his research on the basis of the definition of culture being: “1) the training or refining of the mind; civilization; 2) the unwritten rules of the social game, or more formally the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede et al 2010:516).

4.2.1 Power Distance

“Power Distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede et al 2010:61).

In a workplace within a culture with a large power distance, the power is centralized as much as possible on fewer people, and subordinates are expected to follow instructions. There

are gaps in salaries and qualifications, and the emotional distance between subordinates and bosses is large, meaning that subordinates would not feel comfortable in approaching their bosses, or questioning their decisions. Subordinates prefer an autocratic boss who makes decisions and gives clear instructions. In workplaces in cultures with a low power distance subordinates and superiors are considered to be equal with smaller ranges in salary and variations in qualifications. Dependence on bosses is limited and consultation is desired, leading to an interdependent relationship between colleagues on all levels of leadership.

4.2.2 Individualism versus Collectivism

Individualism “pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family” (Hofstede et al 2010:92). *Collectivism* “pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (:92).

Individualism in the task-oriented workplace would result in relationships being formed through a contract with direct communication of opinions. Work relationships in a relationship-oriented collectivist society would resemble family-like relationships where communication protects the harmony in the group. Whereas an individualistic culture focuses on the management of individuals, the collectivistic culture focuses on the management of groups.

4.2.3 Assertiveness versus Modesty

This dimension is referred to as assertiveness versus modesty, or masculine versus feminine. Hofstede et al define this dimension as follows:

A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede et al 2010:140).

A feminine or modest society would consider careers to be optional for both men and women, resulting in a higher share of working women in professional jobs than one would find in a masculine society where careers are compulsory for men, , not for women. In an intuitive, modest feminine society conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation, while a decisive and aggressive masculine society would resolve conflicts by fights, allowing the strongest to win. In a modest society people tend to work to live, rather than to live to work, as reflected in an assertive society.

4.2.4 Uncertainty-Avoidance

Uncertainty-Avoidance is “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations” (Hofstede et al 2010:191). In the workplace, weak uncertainty avoidance would result in more staff changes, fewer rules, relaxed production level, tolerance for indecisiveness and lack of organisation, and motivation by achievement and belonging. Strong uncertainty avoidance, on the other hand, would result in less change, longer service, a need for rules, to work hard, make profits and to be precise. Where weak uncertainty avoidance societies would view rules as being burdensome, and would only be enforced if absolutely necessary, strong uncertainty avoidance societies view rules as being sacred and a sign of discipline.

4.2.5 Short-term versus Long-term Orientation

Long-term Orientation “stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards – in particular, perseverance and thrift” (Hofstede et al 2010:239). *Short-term orientation* “stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present – in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of “face” and fulfilling social obligations” (:239).

Societies with a short-term orientation have values of freedom, rights, achievement, and leisure, focussing on the present profits rather than focussing on long-term planning and investments. Long-term orientated societies show work values of learning, honesty, adaptiveness, accountability, perseverance, long-term planning and self-discipline.

4.3 Hofstede: Cultural comparisons - Canada, Germany and South Africa

After considering the definitions of Hofstede’s five dimensions, it is possible to focus on his findings on the cultural dimensions, and on the cultural descriptions from further sources with respect to the Canadian, German and South African cultures. With the information from Khan’s studies (2014) on the relationship between Hofstede’s dimensions and the perception of the abuse of power as well as my own deductions resulting from the theoretical research, I conclude by summarising how Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and are related to the abuse of power.

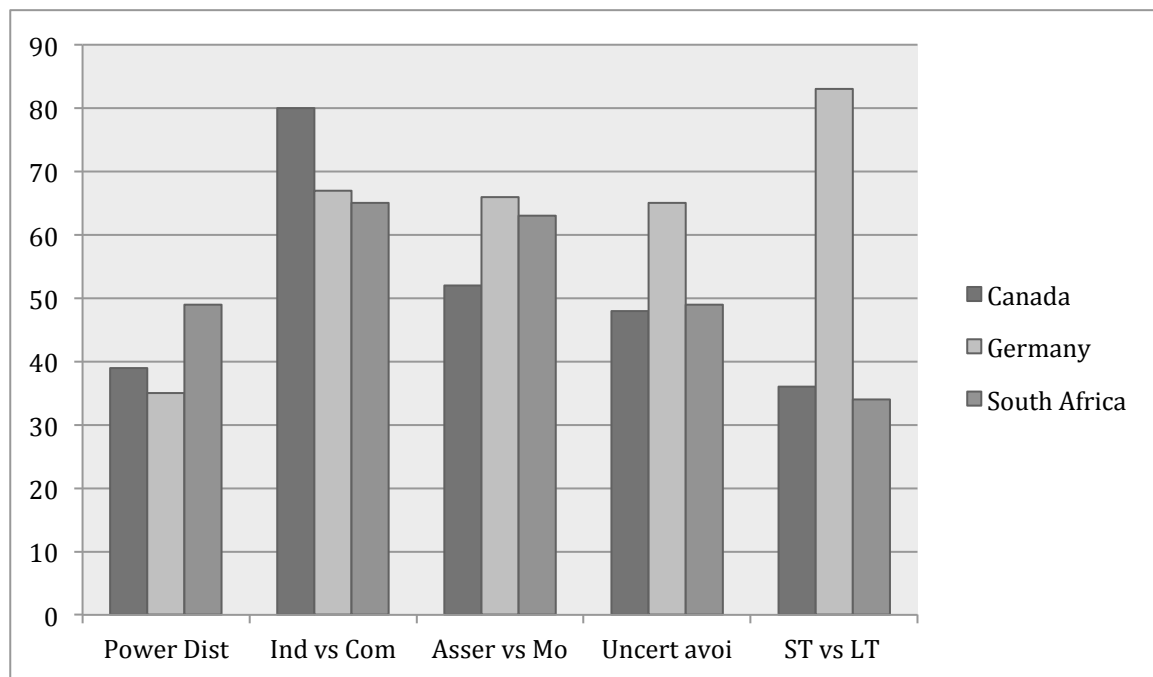


Figure 4.1 Comparison: Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Canada, Germany, South Africa
 (Data for the chart collected from results as recorded in Hofstede (2010:56,94,141,192,255))

4.3.1 Power Distance

On an index of 11 (low) to 104 (high), the three countries compared in this research showed following indices: Canada 39; Germany 35; South Africa 49. This would indicate that German organisations would show slightly more equality and interaction between leadership and subordinates than Canada, and South Africa would show a more authoritarian type of leadership than Canada and Germany, but with all countries in the lower half of the power index spectrum.

Canada's low power distance is confirmed by the fact that the person comes first, business comes second. Furthermore, personal relationships reflecting value and recognition at work are priority. Leaders and followers, employers and employees have equal value, and trust is of utmost importance. These relationships and speaking in an informal and friendly manner about problems is meant to encourage the development of a positive work atmosphere. Interview- and hiring- processes focus more on personal contact and experience than marks and qualifications. It is more important that the person being hired can adapt and integrate into the team than that s/he is highly qualified for the position. Everyone is allowed to voice an opinion, and everyone's opinion is respected.

The German boss can give orders, but, at the same time, the seniority can be reduced to an equal status if the discussion and task at hand require a reaction and decision. Direct and participative communication is expected, but control is not acceptable. At the same time,

leadership can be challenged to show expertise, but the challenger must have the facts and details on hand. Expert status is achieved through academic study, and importance is placed on obtaining the necessary qualifications and title. The personal social skills are secondary.

South Africa's high power distance score is confirmed by the cultural characteristics that people are willing to accept a hierarchical structure in which each person knows his/her place and accepts it without an explanation or justification. Subordinates expect to be told what to do. At the same time, the white South African leader is described as being sensitive to the followers' needs, respecting the followers' ideas, and satisfying their needs with respect and understanding.

In countries where the culture allows a more authoritarian type of leadership, one could expect that the subordinates would be comfortable with receiving clear orders without feeling a sense of dictatorship or lack of respect, even abuse, as in South Africa. In countries with a comparatively low power distance, the subordinates would expect to participate in the decisions of the organisation. If the subordinate does not feel included or consulted in organisational decisions, s/he would have a higher perception of abuse.

Khan proposes that high power distance employees will be less likely to perceive their supervisor as being abusive while low power distance employees will be more likely to perceive their supervisor as abusive (Khan 2014:246). Thus, South African subordinates would be less likely to perceive a situation as being abusive than the Canadians and Germans.

4.3.2 Individualism versus Collectivism

On a scale of 6 (collectivist) to 91 (individualistic) the countries showed following results: Canada 80; Germany 67; South Africa 65, which indicates that Canada would show more individualistic characteristics than Germany and South Africa, but all three cultures indicate a high level of individualism.

Canadians value their freedom and independence in expressing themselves through their opinions, habits, behaviour and appearance. Their privacy is protected in that no one is allowed to comment or discuss these topics personally, whether stranger or friend. Criticism is taken very personally.

Although colleagues are expected to solve problems independently, plan their work and timetable, and privacy and individuality are respected, the Canadians have a strong sense of community. Thomas and Scheuermeyer (2006) make reference to Max Weber, who claimed that this is due to the Anglo-Canadian Protestant values brought by early settlers, promoting capitalism and individualism. People believe that they have a clear calling from

God, and it is their responsibility to discover and follow this individual calling, coupled with a strong sense of community.

Individualism is very important in the German culture. “Everyone has their own interests and rights, but it is expected that they will respect the interests and rights of others” (Schroll-Machl 2013:199). It supports the dignity and the integrity of each individual. This cultural aspect results in an expectation that adults must manage their work and lives themselves; asking for help is perceived as a sign of weakness. In the workplace each individual needs to have clarity as to the boundaries of their responsibilities and freedom. A lack of clarity demands asking questions, which is a sign of interest and strength. The German individualism is characterised with a need for self-actualization, loyalty, and a strong sense of duty and responsibility. The personal space is protected, and in businesses, each person has a clearly defined workspace.

Studies from Chhokar, Brodbeck and House (2012) reveal that “outstanding leaders in South Africa are perceived to show a strong and direct, but democratic and participative, leadership style. They are perceived to be agents of change, visionaries, and individualists ... they are seen as being responsible, rather than as agitators” (Booyesen & van Wyk 2012:453). Individuals are expected to take care of their immediate families.

Khan proposes that high individualistic cultural employees will be more likely to perceive their supervisor as abusive while low individualistic cultural employees will be less likely to perceive their supervisor as abusive (Khan 2014:246). People in individualistic cultures are more likely to be motivated by their individual rights, whereas people in collectivist cultures are motivated by the rights and needs of the group. This would indicate that, while Canadians, Germans and South Africans would tend to perceive a situation as abusive, the Canadians would be much more sensitive than their counterparts in this research.

4.3.3 Assertiveness versus Modesty

On a scale of 5 (feminine) to 110 (masculine), the findings are as follows: Canada 52; Germany 66; South Africa 63, indicating that all countries tend to a more masculine (assertive) index, but in moderation. This could be advantageous in resolving abusive treatment or situations through discussion and compromise on both sides. One would expect that high assertiveness culture employees would be less likely to perceive a situation as abusive than modest culture employees. In this comparison, all three cultures tend to lie within the same scale, but with Canada being more sensitive to an abusive situation.

Because criticism is taken very personally, Canadians tend to avoid discussing subjects that could lead to confrontation or conflict, choosing to communicate in an indirect

manner, which can be misleading for people from other cultures who have not learned to decipher this form of communication. “Canadians are a quiet people who deeply dislike confrontation” (Thomas & Scheuermeyer 2006:64). Personnel reports are structured to begin with praise, followed by subtle, negative feedback, and finishing with compliments. How it is said matters more than what is being said. Breaks in sentences, intonation, body language and expression in speaking are of utmost importance. Conflicts are avoided in postponing the discussion and humour is used to reduce tension.

Cooperation is a key factor in Canada, enabling people from many different backgrounds to live and work together. Helping each other without expectation of reward is natural. This strong sense of cooperation has its roots in the strong religious commitment on which the country was founded, as well as the harsh climate and long distances between centres, requiring the members of each community to support and assist each other. Canadians consider it to be important to enjoy life while working hard. Liking what you do is more important than being the best at what you do. These cultural characteristics of Canadians confirm the tendency to a more modest dimension than the Germans, who show a stronger tendency to assertiveness, as the following description would confirm.

The leadership culture in Germany can be summarised with the word “objectivism”. “When Germans work together professionally, the project or task at hand, the roles and the professional competence of the individuals involved are the central points” (Schroll-Machl 2013:47). The Germans are goal-oriented, and all discussions are supported with arguments and facts. Performance is highly valued. Personal relationships in the workplace are not a priority. Thus, there is little time spent on building relationships with partners or creating a relaxed, friendly atmosphere and they “have relegated all social-emotional aspects of communication to a secondary level” (:49).

With regards to conflict resolution, Germans are confrontational, pointing out mistakes, criticising, analysing and sharing their opinions. They are assertive and defend their position. Saying “no” without giving a reason is not considered to be impolite. On the other hand, praise and recognition is not considered to be necessary, although Schroll-Machl indicates that there is an attempt to change this approach through leadership seminars.

South Africa scores high on assertiveness, on the level with Germany. Hofstede describes South Africans as living to work, and managers are expected to be assertive and decisive, resolving conflicts by fighting. Lewis (2015) describes English-speaking whites in South Africa with the following characteristics: “linear-active, calm, good planners, good manners, reserved, expressive in speech, conflict-avoiding, sports-oriented, affluent, wield

power cautiously” (Lewis 2010:215). In business the white South Africans are known to be entrepreneurial and decisive, come well prepared to meetings, and can discern between business practices in the variety of cultures that they deal with.

Khan (2010) proposes that individuals in strongly assertive cultures are less likely to perceive abuse of power, and individuals in low assertive cultures would be more likely to perceive their supervisory abuse. This would indicate that all three countries are slightly more assertive than average and would be more unlikely to perceive abuse than individuals in less assertive cultures.

4.3.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

On a scale from 8 (low) to 112 (high) following results were determined: Canada 48; Germany 65; South Africa 49, indicating that Germany has a much higher need to avoid uncertainty than Canada and South Africa.

Canadians are known to be accepting of uncertainty and new ideas with regards to new technology, business practices or products. They are generally tolerant of the ideas and opinions of others, not feeling threatened by differences. They do not require a set of rules in order to feel secure.

Germans attempt to avoid mistakes and need order and conformity. They consider fairness to be of great value, and, even though they may seem very objective in the work place, they do enter into deep and lasting relationships. Because of their high need for certainty and the need to avoid risks, they require stipulations, regulations and clearly formulated rules and guidelines.

The high uncertainty ranking is compensated for with a high reliance on expertise. Expert status is important in order to increase certainty and is achieved through academic study. Importance is placed on obtaining the necessary qualifications and title. The personal social skills are secondary. German leaders tend to move slowly when making decisions. The paperwork and the gathering of facts to reduce risks are time-consuming. Structures and hierarchies are mandatory, and a clear line of communication and authority is easily identifiable, with the boss remaining somewhat isolated. Communication takes place mainly on one level within the department, and ideas or suggestions “should be communicated to either your immediate superior or immediate subordinate” (Lewis 2015:113).

South Africans are said to have the ability to cope with uncertainty. Deviation from the norm is tolerated and there are no more rules than necessary. Schedules and punctuality are flexible, and people work hard to live, rather than living to work.

Khan proposes that high uncertainty avoidance culture employees will be less likely to perceive their supervisor as abusive while low uncertainty avoidance culture employees will be more likely to perceive their supervisor as abusive (Khan 2010:246). Thus, Germany would be expected to score lower on the perception of abuse than Canada and South Africa.

4.3.5 Short-term versus Long-term Orientation

On an index scale of 0 to 100, Canada has an index of 36 and South Africa has an index of 34, both indicating short-term orientation. Germany shows a long-term orientation with an index of 83.

The leadership culture in Canada can be summarised with the word “pragmatism”: “action or policy are dictated by the practical consequences rather than by theory” (Collins 1991). Thus, the Canadians, in general, have formed a culture that focuses on being practical, on finding solutions to problems quickly, using common sense and intelligence. With a relatively high-risk tolerance, they can accept failure by explaining that it is never possible to know the result of decisions ahead of time. They can improvise and are flexible, able to solve problems that arise in processes, rather than planning the avoidance of problems in advance.

On the other hand, as the diagram clearly indicates, Germany has a high long-term orientation. Hofstede claims that Germans can adapt traditions to changing conditions, they save and invest for the future, are thrifty and persevere over long periods to reach their results.

With a short-term orientation, the South Africans are not motivated to save for the future, and they focus on achieving quick results. In contrast to the pragmatic Canadian and German, the South African tends to be more normative in his/her thinking.

Khan proposes that individuals in long-term orientation cultures would be less likely to perceive actions as abusive, whereas individuals in short-term orientation cultures would be more likely to perceive actions as abusive. If Khan’s proposition is applicable to Hofstede’s results for the three countries represented in this study, one would expect that German subordinates would be much less likely to perceive actions as being abusive than would their Canadian or South African counterparts.

4.4 Summary: Hofstede and the Abuse of Power

On the basis of Hofstede’s (2010) findings for the dimensions for the three countries, the following chart summarises the perception level for the abuse of power that could be expected in each of the three cultures. The “+” indicates a high chance of perception of the abuse of power, compared to the other countries. The “-” indicates a lower chance of perception of the abuse of power. Each index value counts 1.

Table 4.1 Hofstede's Dimensions and Perception of the Abuse of Power

	Canada (English)	Germany (West)	South Africa (White)
Low/High Power Distance	+	+	-
Individualistic vs Collectivistic	+	-	-
Assertive vs Modesty	-	-	-
Uncertainty vs Certainty	+	-	+
Short-term vs Long-term	+	-	+
	4+/1-	1+/4-	2+/3-

These results indicate that the Canadians' overall tendency would be to perceive abuse more quickly than the South Africans and the Germans.

4.5 Communication and culture

Communication plays a substantial role in successful leadership, organisational teamwork and multicultural working relationships. Although Erin Meyer (2014) has researched many aspects of communication in societies around the world, for the purpose of this research paper I will focus on only one of her aspects of communication: low-context and high-context communication. I will also present communication patterns from Lewis (2015) that reflect how the Canadian, German and South African cultures would be expected to carry out business meetings and reach conclusions.

4.5.1 Erin Meyer: Low-context and high-context communication

Low-context communication is "precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face value. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication" (Meyer 2014:39). By way of contrast, high-context communication is "sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed" (:39). It becomes obvious that the challenges of communicating effectively increase with the rise of multicultural representation in organisations, especially if the team consists of members who represent cultures from the entire spectrum from very low contexts to very high contexts. The low-context communicator is direct and associates directness with trustworthiness. S/he considers the high-context communicator to be secretive and non-transparent. At the same time, a high-context communicator might perceive the low-context communicator to be condescending, feeling that s/he has already understood the point and does not need a detailed explanation.¹⁴

¹⁴ This would differentiate substantially from many high-context cultures for example in Africa and Asia where communication is indirect. People tend to communicate between the lines and to listen between the lines. It may even be impolite to be too detailed and explicit in communication.

It is interesting to note that the Canadian, German and South African cultures as represented in this study all fall into the low-context spectrum. Thus, all three cultures would tend to explain, summarize and document decisions, objectives and delegation of responsibilities.

4.5.2 Lewis: Communication patterns - Canada, Germany and South Africa

Richard Lewis (2015) describes how people in various cultures speak to each other when doing business, and he drew up patterns to represent how people in various cultures conduct business meetings and reach decisions.

Although Canadians fall into the low-context category, it is important to note that they are known to be only moderately direct, and have a reputation for being diplomatic, polite and somewhat informal in their communication style. They expect people to be direct and honest, not making exaggerated claims that could be questionable. They respond to facts and figures, rather than to emotional presentations. At the same time, their well-prepared meetings can begin with pleasantries before engaging in serious business items.

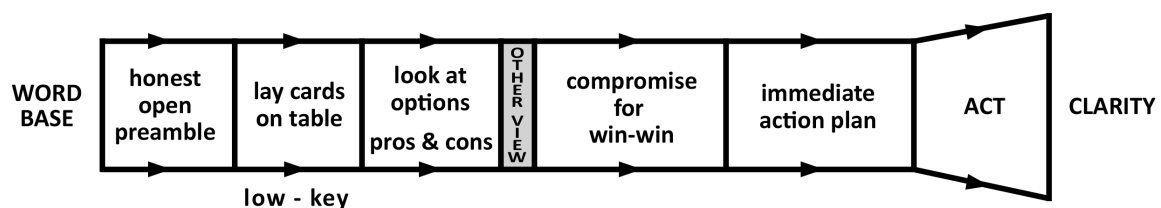


Figure 4.2 Canadian communication pattern (Lewis 2015:189)

As this diagram indicates, a discourse in a Canadian context would begin with an honest, open preamble, followed by presentation of the facts, and a discussion about the options. The process is intercepted with a period in which the view of others can be heard, after which compromises are made in order to find a win-win solution. A plan would immediately be made in order to put the decisions into action.

Communication in German leadership is generally objective and focuses on reaching the common goal. Germans explain the facts in detail, and are not hesitant to focus and analyse the weak spots. Because a professional should be able to accept criticism, it is not necessary to be concerned about being insulting or undiplomatic. “Truth comes before diplomacy” (Lewis 2015:225). They are direct and come straight to the point with well-prepared, convincing arguments.

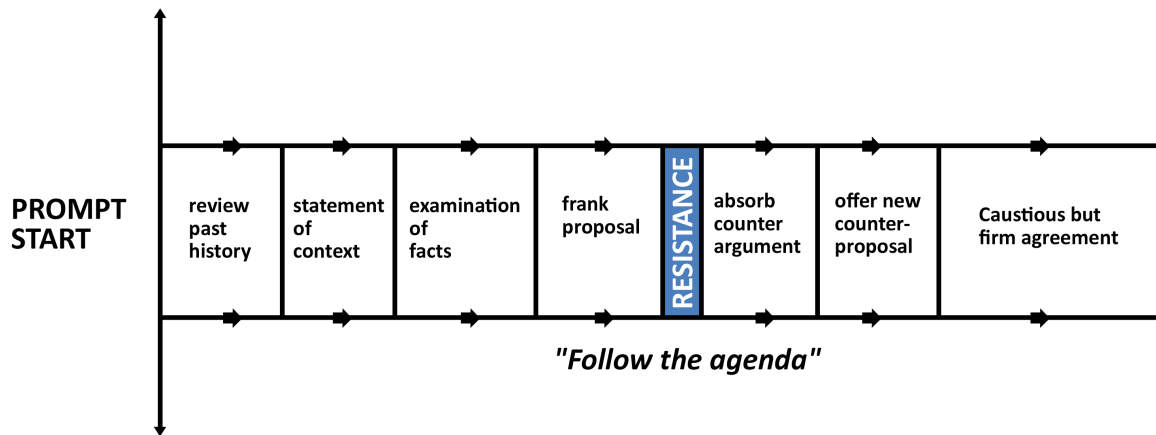


Figure 4.3 German communication pattern (Lewis 2015: 68)

The above diagram indicates a serious business and task-oriented pattern in which there is no time for small talk, and where the matters at hand are reviewed and discussed in detail. There is a period of resistance and discussing problems and arguments before coming to a new agreement.

White, English-speaking South Africans are also considered to be low-context communicators, but are described as having a similar communication pattern as the Canadians.¹⁵ They are considered to be polite and good listeners, but can take control of the discussion, should it be necessary or opportune. Because of the multicultural context in which they have grown up, they are known to have a feeling for adapting their communication style to the cultural context in which they may find themselves at any one time.

The discussion on varying communication styles underlines the complexity of forming effective working relationships in multicultural teams in which leaders take the time and put in the effort to understand what each of the members is actually trying to communicate. Even in monocultural teams, communication and understanding what is being communicated is challenging. The awareness of the communication patterns represented in the team should be discussed in the teams to form a platform of understanding. The team leaders have a responsibility to inform themselves about the cultural variances of communication and to lead the discussions in the team.

4.6 Leadership dimensions: GLOBE Study

The GLOBE Study attempted to identify to what extent “specific leader characteristics and actions are universally endorsed as contributing to effective leadership, and the extent to which these qualities and actions are linked to cultural characteristics” (House & Javidan

¹⁵ I have not included a chart as Lewis does not have a chart specifically for the white South African communication pattern.

2004:14). Furthermore, the researchers considered 35 specific leader attributes or behaviours and how these attributes are contributors in some cultures and impediments in other cultures. The researchers were able to identify six global leader behaviours or leadership dimensions.

The GLOBE Study discusses the ILT: Implicit Leadership Theory, which states that “individuals hold a set of beliefs about the kinds of attributes, personality characteristics, skills and behaviors that contribute to or impede outstanding leadership” (House et al 2004:669). These belief systems affect the acceptance and response of people to their leadership. The Study extends the research to present a further theory, CLT: Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory, which provides evidence that “people within cultural groups agree in their beliefs about leadership such that there are statistically significant differences among cultures in leadership” (:669). The results of their studies revealed that attributes of leaders in some cultures are considered to be positively outstanding, and, in other cultures are considered to hinder good leadership.

The GLOBE study applies the leadership profiles in a practical manner by attempting to make leaders aware of cultural values and practices in order to make “conscious, educated decisions regarding their leadership practices and likely effects on the day-to-day operations and crisis management within an organisation” (:712). The CLT is also helpful for leaders in “selecting, counselling, and training individuals who work in intercultural environments” (:712).

In the following section, the six leadership dimensions and the findings for Canada, Germany and South Africa are graphically compared, followed by a definition of the six dimensions that GLOBE defined in the CLT. I refer to the chapter on Leadership and Cultural Variation by Dorfman, Hanges and Brodbeck (2004:669).

4.6.1 Comparison: Canada, Germany and South Africa

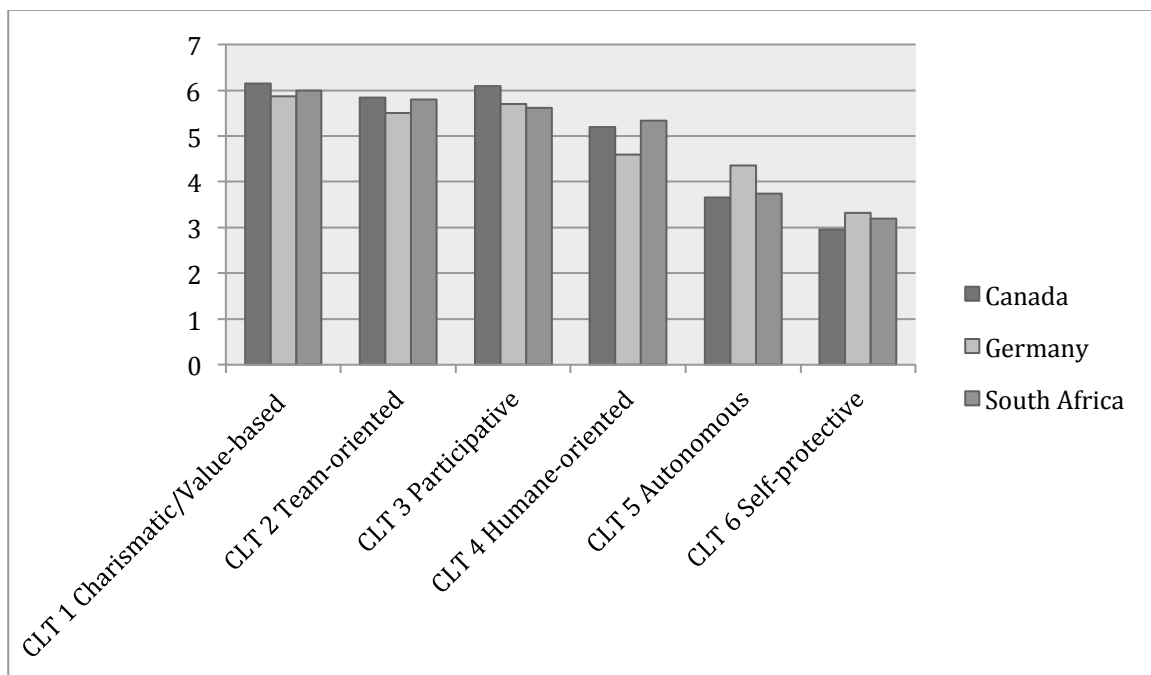


Figure 4.4 Leadership CLT Scores for Canada, Germany and South Africa (House et al 2004:691,695)

1) CLT 1 Charismatic/Value-based leadership

The terms visionary, inspirational, self-sacrifice, integrity, decisive and performance-oriented describe this dimension. The leader has the ability to inspire and motivate followers, and expects high performance based on core values. The diagram shows that all three cultures consider these attributes as essential for effective leadership. It should be noted that this dimension does not refer to the flamboyant, attractive charismatic person, but rather to a leader who has performance-oriented skills, is inspirational, has integrity and can make appropriate decisions. At the same time, it is essential to add that the way in which these values are practiced and perceived will vary from one culture to the next.

2) CLT 2 Team-oriented leadership

This dimension stresses the building of effective teams with a common purpose and goal within the team and includes the following aspects: collaborative team orientation, team integrator, diplomatic, malevolent (reverse scored) and administratively competent. Germans are task-oriented, stressing the importance of administrative competence and team integrative behaviors and technical competency. South Africa and Canada express their team-oriented leadership through humane, caring, relationship-oriented leadership. Leaders are expected to be part of the team, rather than part of a bureaucracy or institution.

3) CLT 3 Participative leadership

The participative leadership dimension “reflects the degree to which managers involve others in making and implementing decisions” (House & Javidan 2004:14). In Germany participative leadership is as important as charismatic/value-based leadership and team-oriented leadership. Canada and South Africa rank high in this dimension. South Africa would likely “show strong and direct, fair and firm, but also democratic, empowering, and authority-delegating leadership (Brodbeck, Chhokar & House 2012:1056).

4) CLT 4 Humane-oriented leadership

As the name suggests, this dimension can be described by a supportive, considerate, compassionate and generous leadership, and includes two subscales: modesty and humane orientation. The leader would be expected to show concern about the wellbeing of the colleagues. As the diagram indicates, the studies show that this dimension is weaker in Germany, as leadership tends to be “institutionalized and depersonalized and the impact of the leader as a person is downplayed” (Chhokar et al 2012:1052). On the other hand, the Anglo Cluster of countries to which Canada and South Africa belong, rank somewhat higher, associating humane-oriented leadership with a high level of participation. The South African leader would be expected to develop his/her followers’ self-confidence in their abilities.

5) CLT 5 Autonomous leadership

Autonomous leadership reflects independence, individualism, autonomy and uniqueness. Of the three countries, this leadership dimension is highest in Germany. The leader is still viewed as being “unique, independent, and individualistic” (Chhokar et al 2012:178). Although the autonomy seems to conflict with the importance placed on participation, the emphasis is placed on a high level of institutionalized participation which allows individuals to attain their individuality and reach group goals while giving them a say in the process. Their technical competence¹⁶ gives them the autonomy they need, as well as the professional demands that can only be met by a high level of self-discipline and self-programming.

6) CLT 6 Self-protective leadership

This leadership behaviour ensures the safety and security of individuals and groups by enhancing their status and “saving face”. The dimension includes five subscales: self-centred, status-conscious, conflict-inducer, face-saver and procedural.¹⁷ As the diagram indicates, none of the three countries showed a high ranking in this dimension. This dimension is least

¹⁶ Autonomous leadership is comparable to French and Raven’s expert power base that is based on what one knows as well as the experience and credentials that one possesses (Subsection 2.3.5).

¹⁷ In subsection 2.6 the aspects that define abusive leaders were discussed. Self-protective leadership with its five subscales fit into the description of an abusive leader, indicating that self-protective leadership is perhaps the most conducive to the abuse of power.

acceptable in Canada, and less prevalent than any of the previous dimensions considered in the three cultures.

4.6.2 Summary

The Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory with the six dimensions underlines many of the descriptions of leadership culture found in this chapter.

For Canadians, the strong sense of community and team, the equality of leaders and followers, the personal relationships and encouragement support the value-based, participative and humane-oriented leadership.

The German cultural correlation can be found in the somewhat isolated position that a German leader takes: a professional, task-oriented approach, less humane and rather impersonal with a clear process and detailed communication; an autonomous, charismatic, value-based and participative approach to leadership.

The South African leadership culture as described in this chapter strongly reflects the humane-oriented dimension, but also the value-based, participative, team-oriented dimensions through their cultural sensitivity, good planning, thoroughness and entrepreneurial spirit.

This chapter confirms that, although the three cultures do not reflect vast differences in the results of the CLT, the detailed cultural descriptions show differences, underlining that the dimensions can have varying forms of expression, depending on the means that each individual culture interprets and expresses its understanding of leadership. The Canadian and South African leadership cultures reflect a more personal, participative, humane-oriented approach to leadership, whereas the German leadership culture reflects a more professional, impersonal, task-oriented approach.

4.7 Conclusion

At the onset of writing the chapter on culture and leadership, it was my intention to determine which cultural dimensions and leadership theories would be conducive to the abuse of power and which cultures would have a higher risk of feeling abused in an organisational setting. The following factors relating to cultures and the abuse of power can be observed from the theoretical research:

1. Even though the diagrams show similarities in the Canadian, German and South African cultures, there are nuances, whether in the form of low-context communication, expression of assertiveness, or areas of life where individualism is protected and where transparency is expected. Thus, it becomes even more relevant for multicultural organisations to be aware of these variances and to discuss these

variances in order to find ways of accepting, complementing or adapting in order to avoid misunderstandings.

2. It is difficult to point to specific cultural dimensions and determine that a certain one leads to abuse, or feeling more abused. One example is the more authoritarian, high-power distance dimension found in South Africa. This autocratic system is accepted within the cultural parameters, and within this system, the subordinates look to the leader for clear instructions, even being told what to do and how to do it. In another system, this leader could be considered to be bossy, and, in extreme cases, a dictator. The point at which the cultural dimensions become critical is when the various cultures collide with each other, increasing the risk that people could feel abused or neglected, depending on the cultural mix.
3. The chart in subsection 4.4 makes it clear that, on the basis of Hofstede's (2010) cultural dimensions and Khan's (2014) study, the Canadians would be expected to show a higher tendency to perceive situations as abusive than the Germans and South Africans.
4. The communication patterns (Lewis 2015) show that there are distinct differences in the processes that are used in cultures for planning and reaching decisions. In contrast to the Canadians and South Africans, the Germans have a longer process that includes a review of the past history, detailed examination with proposal, as well as a discussion of arguments resulting in a new counter-proposal and an agreement. The Canadians and South Africans come to a win-win compromise after an open discussion, laying the cards on the table and discussing the pros and cons. These differences show how important it is for leaders to understand the differences and to find a consensus between cultures in order to conduct business meetings in a productive manner.

Kessler and Kretzschmar (2015:3) state that, just as leaders in the Bible lived by faith in their contexts, seeking to bring socio-cultural, political and economic transformation, so must Christian leaders lead in "contemporary contexts and cultures without being determined by them", retaining adherence to the moral principles of their Christian faith. This requires awareness of cultural differences, respect and, at the same time, criticism for them, and the willingness to find creative avenues to amalgamate the cultures in a team to create an effective organisational culture. Understanding the cultural differences should result in preventing misunderstandings in multicultural teams. This understanding also means that a leader must, at the same time, learn to understand cultural variances before stereotyping

individuals, as well as guarding against judgmental thinking and separating the cultural variances into “right and wrong”, “good and bad”.

Power, the abuse of power, the effects on perpetrators, victims and organisations was discussed in chapter two. Ethical Christian leadership was discussed in chapter three. In this chapter I researched the aspects of cultural variances and their effects on leadership and the abuse of power. In the final chapters of this dissertation these three research topics will be linked with each other, and the significance of power, Christian leadership and culture will be emphasized.

This concludes the theoretical research section of this dissertation. Chapter five follows with a detailed explanation of the methodology of the empirical research. In chapter six the data and the analysis of the data from the empirical research questionnaire is presented.

Chapter Five: Empirical research - methodology

Embarking on a theoretical research journey requires reading and analysing what others have experienced and discovered. The empirical research requires the personal involvement and the curiosity to generate and evaluate data that will confirm, expand or perhaps even reject elements of the theoretical research. Just as the personal, live participation on a journey changes the perspective on the place that one has previously read or heard about, in the same way, the empirical research influences the perspective one has of the theoretical research.

In chapter one I explained *why* the empirical research was carried out, and in this chapter I explain *how* the empirical research was carried out and how the data was interpreted.

In subsection 1.4.4 I stated that the empirical research is designed to build on the foundation laid through the theoretical research in chapters two, three and four. In conjunction with the literary research, the empirical research enables me to generate, analyse and compare data from leaders of Christian organisations in Canada, Germany and South Africa. The data is not only useful for a comparison between the three cultures, but it also confirms, complements or challenges the theoretical findings.

Also, in chapter one (1.4.4) I referred to Jennifer Mason (2002), who points out the importance of reflecting on and determining how theory, data, and the analysis of the information can be given clarity, bringing them into a beneficial cohesiveness. The empirical research modifies the theoretical research. I referred to Merriam's (1998:49) reference to research being able to shape or modify the existing theory rather than developing new constructs and concepts (grounded theory), and, at the same time, adding to the knowledge and recommendations relevant to the research topic. This model is most adaptive to the gathering of theoretical and empirical data, and the analysis of the data in this dissertation. It is my intention to shape or modify the existing knowledge about the abuse of power in Christian organisations, and to extend the existing findings, using the empirical findings on the abuse of power relating to multicultural teams, a field that has not been widely researched in the past.

I carried out a qualitative research on the topic of the abuse of power in Christian organisations in the three cultures with the use of questionnaires, asking direct and indirect questions. Mouton (2001) defines the qualitative evaluation approach as naturalistic as this research approach is used to "describe and evaluate the performance of programmes in their natural settings, focusing on the process of implementation rather than on (quantifiable) outcomes" (Mouton 2001:161). Qualitative research aims to provide in-depth descriptions of

groups of people or organisations. In this research I did not set out (for example) to find out how many people in the various cultures are abused or abuse their power, or how often it occurs (as in quantitative research), but rather to gain an in-depth insight into the abuse of power in the cultures. It was my intent to allow the participants to share their experiences and their information on a natural, personal basis.

In this chapter I present the criteria for the selection of the research participants in each of the three countries. I describe the process of the development of the empirical research, including a detailed description of the development and designing of the questionnaire. I also reflect on the ethical considerations relating to the empirical research. The chapter concludes with the explanation of how the collected data was analysed and the structure that I have selected in order to present the analysed data.

5.1 Personal interviews

At the very onset of planning the empirical research for the dissertation, I had intended to examine three real life case studies involving the abuse of power, interviewing one victim in a Christian organisation in each of the three countries represented in this paper, with the intention of approaching the abuser to complete the story. However, approaching the abuser in each of the cases to complete the story posed a problem in that the victim may not have consented to me asking the suspected abuser to share his/her side of the story as an abuser of power. Revealing the issues in each of the stories without informing the abuser may have posed an ethical problem, should the person discover that the victim had exposed the leader's behaviour as being abusive and unethical, reflecting negatively on not only the leader, but also the organisation.

Furthermore, in the process of the development of the questionnaires for the individual interviews with the victims and the questionnaires for the leaders, it became evident that the investment of time and effort, as well as the amount of data that would be generated by carrying out both avenues of empirical research, would go beyond the scope of this dissertation. I realized that it would be possible to formulate the questionnaires for the leaders in such a way that I could obtain the data necessary to adequately carry out the empirical research to round out the theoretical research without carrying out the personal interviews with the victims.

Thus, it was decided to generate data by sending a questionnaire to five leaders of Christian organisations in each of the three countries, thereby collecting data from the perspective of leaders from various types of Christian organisations. The questionnaire allowed the participants to share their knowledge and experience on the topics of Christian

leadership, power, the abuse of power and culture, and, at the same time, I asked questions that allowed them to tell their personal stories relating to abuse, should they have a story and wish to share it.

5.2 The participants

The leaders who received the questionnaire work for a variety of Christian organisations¹⁸: Christian colleges (instructors), churches (board members and/or pastors), mission organisations (directors, board members) and non-profit organisations (CEOs). While some are my personal acquaintances, I do not have an organisational relationship to them in their leadership. Others lead organisations with which I have a direct or indirect affiliation, or are contacts of people I know, but have not met personally. This personal distance from the participants, and, especially their personal stories, is important for several reasons. First of all, it enables me to analyse their responses without having preconceived opinions or have personal feelings about alleged abuse. Secondly, it allows the participants to supply data that cannot be connected to my association with them nor lead to tension between the participants and their associates.

The five participants from each of the 3 countries are illustrative of the countries. This is a pilot study that could lead to a more detailed study with a larger sample size. A larger number of participants for this dissertation would have created large amounts of data for a dissertation that is already very complex.

To compensate for the smaller sample, the questionnaire was detailed and posed not only multiple choice questions, but also open-ended questions to which the participants could respond by sharing their own thoughts and stories.

The age of the participants ranges from 26 years to 74 years. I selected the participants according to the following criteria:

1. The participants should represent organisations that are made up of, for the most part, Anglophone-Canadians, West Germans and white South Africans who have an English-speaking background.
2. The participants must be leaders or recently have held leadership positions in Christian organisations.
3. The participants must give written consent of their willingness to participate in the research before receiving the questionnaire.
4. The participants should not be related to me.

¹⁸ In order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and to prevent the organisations of which they are a part from being identified, I have chosen not to provide specific information on the organisations in this dissertation.

5. The participants should not have a connection to my personal experiences of the abuse of power.
6. The participants should be willing to participate, but also express an eagerness to share, and show an interest in the topic of the research.
7. The participants should represent various levels of leadership, various types of Christian organisations and have different levels of experience and cultural exposure.

After careful consideration, I made an exception to the criteria in order to include one person in South Africa. This person was actually born in Europe, but has lived in South Africa for 25 years, has been a board member of a South African church, mission organisations, as well working as a mentor for mission organisations. He has valuable multicultural experience and knows the South African culture well. Although he is not a South African, I chose to include him in this research because of his experience and his knowledge of culture and leadership.

I also made an exception for one participant in Germany. This person is German, lives presently in Germany, but has managed international teams outside of Germany for many years. At the time of the research, he was living in Germany, but was unemployed after returning from his overseas assignment. His vast experience in the areas of the abuse of power and culture, as well as recognizing cultural variances is an asset to this research. Therefore, I chose to ask him to participate, even though he is not presently managing a Christian organisation, and he did not manage in Germany.

I initially asked six leaders from each country to participate in the research; all but one consented to complete the questionnaire. After sending out the questionnaire to the consenting leaders, it became evident that I would have to find further participants as the circumstances of some of the participants had changed in the meantime, making it difficult for them to find the time to complete the questionnaire. I decided to carry out the data analysis upon receiving five completed questionnaires, rather than six. I wrote two to three reminders to the various participants who had not met my initial deadline. This became effective when I wrote personal Emails to the participants, rather than general mails to the group, asking the individuals to inform me, should it no longer be possible to complete the questionnaire.

Table 5.1 Participants: Empirical Research

	Gender	Age	Position
Canada	Male 2 Female 3	36, 37, 55, 58, 61	-Pastor: 1 -CEO-Missions: 1 -Elder, Interim Pastor: 1 -College department leader: 1 -Academic Dean 1
Germany	Male 5	51, 51, 51, 53, 65+	-Pastor: 1 -National Denominational Board 1 -Missions Manager: 1 -Personnel Manager Missions: 1
South Africa	Male 3 Female 2	26, 60, 66, 70, 74	-Pastor: 3 -CEO Missions: 1 -Board Member, Board Advisor, Former Elder: 1

5.3 Survey-based Research

In a survey-based research design, “you are essentially trying to elicit information from a limited number of individuals who are presumed to have the information you are seeking, who are able and willing to communicate, and who are ... intended to be representative of a larger group” (Hofstee 2006:122). The five leaders of Christian organisations in each of the three countries are a representation of the Christian leaders in their respective countries. Hofstee underlines the importance of being careful to ask the right questions, and at the same time stating: “if you want to know, ask” (:122). The questions must be carefully formulated, it is important that the representation is adequate, and that ethical guidelines are carefully followed.

The empirical research has been carried out by constructing a written questionnaire that was sent to five leaders in each of the three countries. Hofstee (2006:132-133) recommends asking structured questions and avoiding open-ended questions as much as possible due to the fact that people vary in their ability and willingness to answer the open-ended questions. The answers to open-ended questions can be difficult to analyse. At the same time, open-ended questions can allow for in-depth answers. Thus, it is important to choose participants who are willing to invest the time and are capable of providing answers with in-depth information.

The questions are formulated in such a way as to gain the appropriate information necessary for analysis and comparison in the three cultures. An explanation of terms relating to leadership and culture is included where necessary. Questionnaires are a means of gathering information from people who assumedly can provide valuable information. On the other hand, this information could be biased or difficult to analyse. Questionnaires do not allow interaction between the researcher and the participant, resulting in limitations in probing

for deeper information, as well as the inability to observe body language. At the same time, a well-structured questionnaire can lead to written results that can be compared for quantitative data, and confidentiality can be ensured. “Directness and clarity in the formulation of questions are vital. All respondents should be able to understand your questions easily” (:133). The questions should not be structured in such a way as to influence the respondents to answer in a particular manner. Grouping the questions into categories can assist the participant to follow development of the content, and the data can be analysed more efficiently.

Initially I had intended to translate the questionnaire for the German participants into German in order to avoid misunderstandings. However, due to the complexity and length of the questionnaire, and due to the fact that most participants have a working level of written English, I sent the questionnaire in English. I gave the participant the option to answer the questionnaire in German or English, offering each one to contact me, should there be any need for clarification of the questions.

The questions are constructed in various forms. Open format questionnaires allow the opportunity for the interviewee to provide freely experienced personal views. Closed format questionnaires include importance or ranking questions (respondents rate the importance of issues such as ethical characteristics of a good leader) and bipolar questions (especially useful for information regarding a respondent’s awareness of his/her culture).

5.4 Development of the questionnaire

The questionnaire¹⁹ for the empirical research is divided into the following sections, based on the theoretical research chapters:

1. What is an ethical leader?
2. How do leaders define power?
3. How do leaders perceive the abuse of power and its results? Have they experienced or witnessed abuse; can they recall situations in which they may have acted abusively?
4. What strategies do they have for the identification, prevention, and resolution of the abuse of power in Christian organisations, not only in their own culture, but also in multicultural teams?
5. How do leaders understand their own culture, and do they associate the presence of multiple cultures with the abuse of power?
6. Does the abuse of power occur in multicultural teams in Christian organisations? If so, in what form?

¹⁹ See Appendix A: Research Questionnaire .

After completing a substantial part of the theoretical research, I began to formulate the questionnaire. The questionnaire is structured differently than the theoretical research in that it begins with Osmer's normative task, rather than the descriptive-empirical and interpretive tasks (see 1.5.3). The purpose of this change of order was to build a positive foundation for the participants before moving directly into the possibly threatening topic of abuse. In this way, I attempted to draw the participants into the topic of leadership and what they consider to be ethical Christian leadership. Creating the first draft was the beginning of a lengthy process in which many changes were necessary in order to produce a questionnaire that would adequately generate the data needed to answer the research questions.

Several factors influenced the development of the initial draft. First of all, as I continued to revise and extend the theoretical research, I was able to focus more clearly on the aspects that were necessary to address in the questionnaire. For example, in the theoretical research, I focus on five issues that are relevant for ethical Christian leadership and linked to the abuse of power: spiritual transformation, love, servant leadership, accountability, as well as forgiveness with trust. As a result, I added questions that relate to these issues. Similarly, I focussed on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Meyer's low- and high-context communication, rather than attempting to include more cultural aspects from other sources.

A further factor that influenced the initial draft was the decision to reduce the empirical research to one questionnaire, rather than carrying out the additional 3 case studies with personal interviews. Thus, the questions 4.7-4.16 were added in order to allow the participants to share their stories. Although this deleted the face-to-face, personal emotional aspects that an interview would offer, it was now possible to allow all participants to share their story, should they have one that they felt was appropriate to share. Also, all participants answered the same questions, allowing me to be able to compare their responses.

Another factor that initiated changes and additions to the questionnaire was the feedback that I received, first of all from my supervisors, secondly from a response from a potential participant, and thirdly from the five pretest responses.

I contacted the potential participants very early on in the process while I was still working on the theoretical research to ask if they would be willing to participate in the research. One of the potential participants responded with a negative, commenting that Christian leaders are mostly well-meaning and do not intentionally abuse others, and, more often, subordinates abuse leaders because the subordinates do not understand what leadership is about. As negative as this comment appeared initially, it made me aware that it would be

valuable to gain information on the “reverse” abuse. As a result, questions 4.17-4.19 were formulated.

I received feedback on the questionnaire pretest from five people who have been in Christian organisations either in leadership and/or abusive situations, of which two have completed a Masters Degree. Two women and three men completed the questionnaire with additional comments and suggestions. All of these participants have multicultural experience. Although I had intended to receive feedback from only three people, one couple reviewed the questionnaire, giving feedback from two perspectives: the wife gave me feedback on the content and the husband on the structure. Another person asked to complete the questionnaire out of curiosity. As a result, I had enough valuable feedback to allow me to determine which questions were not clear, and which open-ended questions needed to be more clearly defined.

I restructured the table in 3.2 and 3.3 as all of the pretest participants understood that they should fill the answer for 3.2 after the question and not by entering their answers in the table. I reworded 4.2 as some of the answers indicated that the question was not specific enough to give the feedback that I needed. As a result, I asked for personal characteristics, rather than what characterises a leader who is abusive might have. Question 4.5 was also not specific enough and I changed the question from possible areas/opportunities in the organisation that can be used by leaders to abuse their power to name situations in organisations that carry potential for leaders to abuse their power. In section 4, question 4.8, I initially asked for the participant to list the main issues in an abusive incident. This was not understood clearly, and was changed to asking the participant to briefly tell his/her story. Under 4.18, a further option was suggested: Yes, but in a respectful manner.

Section 5 addresses issues regarding solutions. Initially questions 5.5 and 5.6 were combined as one question relating to what has already been done to prevent the abuse of power in the organisation. It was suggested that I divide this question into two parts: asking what the participant has done on a personal level to prevent the abuse of power, (5.5) and what the organisation has done to prevent the abuse of power (5.6), which I consider to be a valuable differentiation. In the beginning of this section I later inserted four questions (5.1-5.4) to ask the participant for feedback on the issues of love, and trust and forgiveness in leadership and their relationship to the abuse of power.

With respect to the cultural dimensions in section 6, rather than describing the dimensions and asking the participants to study these terms, I attempted to transfer the dimensions onto a practical level with the intention that I would be able to observe how people assess their cultural dimensions, depending on where they come from. In this section I

also added an open-ended question on the significance of communication skills, especially with regards to multicultural teams. This question arises out of the discussion on low- and high-context communication in cultures as explained in chapter four.

One person commented that all Yes/No questions should have Yes ____ No ____ as written options next to the question. Another indicated there would be more clarity as to what I am expecting in providing the option “other” by adding the request: Please explain.

One of the pretest participants became very involved with the subject of the abuse of power in Christian organisations. This person noted seven stories of abuse that he had personally experienced or observed. In each of the situations, he was able to identify a third party who, according to the participant’s opinion, could have stepped in and prevented or halted the process of abuse. In each of the cases, however, the person (third party) chose not to become involved by revealing the abuse of power or defending the victim. I consider this to be a valuable observation for this dissertation, and question 4.16 was formulated as a result.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

All participants are older than 18 years and consented in writing to participate in the research. Their identity and that of their organisation remains anonymous and no reference to any person is made that could link the person to an incident in their organisation. Each leader that expressed willingness to participate in the research by completing the questionnaire has signed the participant’s informed consent. The participants understood that they would not be compensated for their participation in this study. No costs were incurred through their participation as the questionnaires were sent to them by Email and all the responses were returned by Email with the exception of one, which was returned by post.

The purpose of this dissertation is to expose the limitations of Christian Leadership and not to provide intervention, pastoral care or counselling to resolve the issues in the individual stories shared by the participants. However, because of the high level of interest from the participants, they will be informed of subsequent publications that will be available to them. They will also have the opportunity to upload the dissertation from the Unisa Institutional Repository.

5.6 Comparative Analysis

“When doing comparative analysis, the researcher investigates, in a focused and systematic manner, two items (sometimes three, but any more than that can easily become confusing) in depth and compares them to each other to find the reasons for difference of similarity” (Hofstee 2006:124). Hofstee warns that this research design can be very complex, due to the increased number of variables that can make it difficult to draw conclusions. Therefore, it is

important for the research questions to be focused and the number of variables must be reduced in order to generate convincing results.

The theoretical comparison of the three cultures as they relate to leadership and the abuse of power in chapter four is used as a springboard for the analysis of the data from the questionnaires.

5.7 Structure of data analysis

Hofstee (2006:140-141)) suggests various structures for the analysis and presentation of the data collected from the questionnaires. The typical body structure begins with a chapter on the research findings, followed by a chapter on the analysis, and finally a chapter presenting subconclusions.

The second structure also begins with a single chapter on the research findings. The analysis (findings and conclusions) of the data for each of the sections of the questionnaire are broken down into individual chapters. The data analysis in chapter six in this dissertation follows Hofstee's third structure in which the research findings are broken into appropriate sections and the analysis with subconclusions follow in the same chapter.

In order to gain an overview of the data, I entered all the responses from the participants from the same country into one questionnaire. This applies to the ranking and choice questions. In this way I could analyse the frequency that the participants chose the same answers. I analysed the open questions by writing the question on a flipchart and reading through the answers from the participants for any one question, identifying the repetitive or related comments. These were entered on the flipchart on the left side with the number of participants that gave the same or related responses. Any other less frequent or single comments that were given were entered on the right side of the flip chart. This made it possible for me to find patterns in the responses, as well as being able to document exceptionally unique or valuable comments.

From the information collected on the questionnaire and the flipchart, it was possible to write a summary of the findings that the data offered. This was carried out for each individual country. The data from the open-ended questions was entered into charts to provide an overview of the information. Significant responses that provide new insights into the issues addressed in this dissertation were collected. As the above outline indicates, this was carried out for each individual section of the questionnaire. In each section the data analysis is followed by the analysis and comparison of the theoretical research and the findings from the empirical research.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter explains in detail the preparation of the empirical research by describing the development of the questionnaire, the criteria in the selection of the research participants, the ethical considerations, the data collection process and the structure selected for the data analysis. It is now time to consider what the collected data reveals about the abuse of power in Christian organisations, specifically in Canada, Germany and South Africa.

Chapter six: Empirical research findings

In this chapter I present the data that I received from the 15 research participants. The data is compiled in tables, and the responses from the questions that listed choices are marked with C (Canada), G (Germany) and A (South Africa). This provides easy access to the data from each individual country, but also allows for comparison of the data from the three cultures. The terms (or related terms) that appeared more than once in response to a specific question are numbered, indicating the frequency that the various participants used the term. Quotations from the participants are coded with a C (Canada), G (Germany) and A (South Africa) to indicate the culture of the participant who I quoted.

6.1 What is an ethical leader?

In chapter three, ethical leadership was discussed, answering the question from Osmer's normative task: "What should be going on?" I move on to the empirical research with great interest and anticipation, eager to present and analyse the data that the Christian leaders have provided. The first section of the questionnaire contains general questions about the respondent (subsection 5.2). The actual questions for the collection of data appear in the second section that consists of five open questions, as seen below.

6.1.1 Data compilation: What is an ethical leader? – Questions 2.1-2.5

In reading the responses to the open questions in this section on ethical leadership, the initial impression was that there was little repetition of answers and that the list of responses to the questions was growing with each registered response and with each country represented in the research. However, in reviewing the responses and studying the information entered on the flipchart, it was possible to find and count repetitive responses.

Table 6.1 Question 2.1 *What do you consider to be the 5 most important attributes of an ethical leader? List in order of importance (number 1 being what you consider to be most important).*

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Integrity (x3): virtues, uprightness, congruency, excellence of character, fruits of the Spirit	Integrity (x2)	Integrity (x3): be a good example (behave as you would expect from others, by being a good follower).
Communication (x4): inspirational, good empathetic listener and enquirer who values people, delivers a powerful message	Clarity	Passionate (x2): clear calling, enthusiastic, value driven
Honesty (x3)	Honesty (x4)	Honesty (x4): committed to truth and excellence

Humility (x2)	Humility (x2)	Humble (x2): yet confident of self-worth
Transparency/Genuine (x2)		Admitting mistakes when wrong
Personal transformation, accepts counsel and correction)	Willingness to learn Ability to accept criticism (x2)	Willingness to keep learning
Competent (understands context in which s/he leads without compromising ethics)	Competent (Leadership qualities)	Gift awareness
Reflexivity	Reflexivity (on various ethical positions)	
Sense of justice	Fair and just (x2)	Just
Loyalty		Submitted to leadership of senior authority in same field
Courageous to address difficult situations		
Trust		
Takes responsibility	Responsible	
Strong set of core values		
Values people, respect	Love and respect	Considerate of subordinates: people in the organisation more important than the organisation; listening to those you lead, encouraging them, thanking them, positive feedback, respectful
Teachable servant	Servant Leadership (x2)	Servant leader
	Bible as authority (x2)	Personal active relationship to God
	Accountability	Willing to be accountable
	Decision-maker	
	Composed (not stressed)	Steadfast, consistent

Integrity, honesty and humility are the three attributes that appeared most frequently in the responses from the participants in the three countries. At least one person from each of the countries considered a willingness to learn, as well as being a servant to be important. It is important to note that the Canadian considered the willingness to accept counsel and correction as part of the teachability, whereas two German responses stated that the leader should be willing to accept criticism. My personal experience in Canada and Germany confirms these terms, as I learned in Canada that criticism has a negative connotation, also for Christians. However, the term correction is a more acceptable term. As a Canadian living in Germany I struggle with the term “Kritik” as I perceive it to have a negative, demeaning connotation.

At least one participant in each of the countries considered good communication to be important. The explanations ranged from inspirational, good listener from the Canadians, simply “clarity” from Germany, and the South Africans associated this with being passionate, having a clear calling, being value driven and enthusiastic. Competence in the sense of understanding the context of leadership (Canada), in the sense of leadership qualities (Germany) and in the sense of gifts (South Africa) was also considered to be important. The attribute of a sense of justice was shared by all countries, and two Germans shared this

opinion. Respect was also considered by one person in each of the countries to be an important attribute.

The Canadians and Germans shared the attribute of reflexivity, and taking on responsibility. The Canadians and South Africans shared being transparent and genuine, being willing to admit mistakes when wrong, loyalty and submission to leadership, as well as valuing people. The Germans and South Africans stated the willingness to be accountable, as well as the spiritual aspect (German: Bible as authority (x2); South Africa: personal active relationship to God).

Two responses from German leaders were not shared by the others: decision maker and composed (not stressed). One further response from South Africa was steadfast, consistent.

Table 6.2 *Question 2.2 What do you consider to be 5 actions/types of behaviour that leaders should consciously avoid?*

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Favouritism (x3): pitting team members against each other, exploiting or manipulating others	Complaining about others (x3): taking sides, verbal and non-verbal abuse – withdrawing love	Unfair (x4): negative attitude speaking negatively to staff about other staff, allowing themselves “to be bought”, claiming credit for work of one of the staff, having favourites, undermining confidence of those you lead
Secrecy (x3): hiding conflict of interest, refusing to be transparent, poor communication	Communication (x4): Concealing information from team members, unclear expectations, poor listener, indecisive	Not transparent
Lying (x3): dishonesty, spinning the truth	Not stepping up for the truth, dishonest (x2)	Dishonesty (x4)
Dictatorship	Controlling (x2): egocentric, powerseekers, lack of respect	Dictatorial behaviour (x4): being too demanding; dictatorial because personally threatened, manipulative, dogmatic, narcissistic, personally threatened leading to building power base
Inconsistency (x2): untrustworthy - not doing what you say you will do	Lack of integrity (x3): undependable, poor example, different standard for subordinates than oneself	Hypocritical behaviour, actions do not match words
Arrogance (x2): self-importance, pride	Arrogance	Pride
Personal moral failure		Lack of self-discipline and time-management leading to abuse of privileges
Taking easy or popular road	Wanting to be well-liked	
Presuming info rather than finding facts		
Not trusting colleagues		
Theft (of money, property, intellectual property)		
Anger	Anger (x3): emotional to reach own goals	
Competitiveness		

Micromanaging		
Drivenness leading to decreased well-being of others and expecting the same of others		
	Only ministry – no fun	
	Not involving females	
	Non-reflective	
	Perfect	
		Not willing to be accountable to senior leadership
		Inability to work in team or earn respect to lead team
		Unprofessional
		Lazy
		Bribery
	Indecisive	
	Ignoring Bible (teachings of Jesus)	

It is important to mention that the manner in which leaders treat their team members is a strong issue in each of the three countries. Justice is an important issue with responses ranging from favouritism to complaining about others, and treating others unfairly. Dishonesty showed itself to be an important aspect of negative behaviour in leaders, as well as communication that is secretive, non-transparent and unclear. A dictatorial or controlling form of leadership, as well as inconsistency between words and actions were also considered to be negative.

Canadians and Germans shared two further opinions: taking the easy or popular road (wanting to be well-liked), and anger (although rated higher by the Germans).

Canadian leaders mentioned presuming information rather than finding facts, not trusting colleagues, theft, competitiveness, micromanaging, and drivenness (leading to decreased well-being of others and expecting the same of others). Germans added that negative behaviour includes concentrating only on ministry and not having fun, not involving females, ignoring Biblical teachings, being non-reflective, indecisive, lacking respect, and being too perfect. South Africans added not being willing to be accountable, inability to work in teams or earn respect to lead the team, a lack of professionalism, laziness and bribery.

One German response referred to negative behaviour in not involving females. It should be mentioned here that, in searching for women in leadership in Christian organisations who could participate in the research, it was most difficult to find a qualified woman in leadership in Germany (one woman consented, but was not available at the time that the questionnaire was sent out).

One person mentioned the danger of “taking the popular road”. This statement underlines Nouwen’s (1989) reference to the temptation to be relevant (see 2.6.1).

The discussion in chapter three focuses on the attributes that one would expect to find in an ethical leader. The way in which leaders treat their colleagues is an important issue for leaders: respecting others and their rights, treating them with dignity and fairness and seeking to encourage others and enhance their gifts and abilities. Further important attributes that should characterise an ethical Christian leader are trustworthiness, integrity, competence, and development of moral character. Anselm Grün (2006) adds that in order to be in a transformation process, the person must be self-reflective and self-disciplined. Ralph Schubert's (2008) list of values includes love, mercy, humility, faithfulness and justice.

The responses from the participants underline each of these attributes. Repeatedly, respecting others, integrity, honesty, competence and personal development (transformation), and a sense of justice were stated as being important attributes. Regarding competence, one participant wrote: A leader "understands current reality and the context of the setting in which they are leading, alert to and able to guard against influences that would compromise their ethics". (C)

The importance of how a leader views others is reflected in these statements from two research participants. The last sentence in the quote contradicts Kessler (2010) Ethics and Power (subsection 2.4) and his twofold law of love (Kessler 2012) (subsection 3.2.2.2) in that the participant says the people have priority over the organisation and Kessler says that the organisation and the mission are more important than the individual in the organisation.

A high value is placed on the worth of people, sees the potential of individuals, regards others with unconditional positive regard; it is hard to treat another unethically while accepting and acknowledging the basic worth of the person as a human being. The organisation is not more important than the people in the organisation. (C)

The five aspects of ethical Christian leadership that are discussed more extensively in the chapter are spiritual transformation, love, servant leadership, accountability, and trust and forgiveness. Together with a concise review of the discussion in chapter three, the responses of the participants to these aspects are presented in the following section.

"The essential link between virtue, character and power cannot be overemphasised. It is for this reason that spiritual formation as a vital part of theological education is so important if we are to produce competent, honest and committed leaders" (Kretzschmar 2006:59). I emphasise this quote with one of the comments from the empirical research: "One who humbly embraces life-long learning – such a leader will be open to personal transformation, counsel and correction from trusted peers preventing ethical missteps" (C).

In chapter three, servant leadership was presented as an essential aspect of leadership, having a positive influence on the individual, organisational and societal levels. It means empowering others, allowing people to make mistakes, aspiring to serve and not to lead, being open to self-discipline, criticism and correction.

Although there were no direct references made in the questionnaire to servant leadership, it is important to recognize that the term and related terms were repeatedly used by individuals from each of the countries represented in this paper. The respondents registered servant leadership in an open response, an indication of the level of relevance that it has for them in leadership.

Table 6.3 Question 2.3 Which persons/positions are directly accountable to you in your leadership position?

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Administrative assistant		
Children's ministry director	Leaders of teams in church	
Youth pastor	Pastors	
Volunteer leaders	Cell-leaders, Trainee	All workers in all departments
Actors, designers, crew, directors, stage managers, production managers		
Lead pastor (to the board)	Board	Church council
Registrar		
Librarian		
Program coordinator	Program and Regional Director	
Teaching faculty/sessional instructors		
Senior leadership team (including finance, recruiting and operations)	Bookkeeper	
	Secretary	
	Organisation President	
		Managers in other departments of the organisation

Table 6.4 Question 2.4 To which persons/positions are you accountable?

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Head of communications (in church)	Board members	Board Chairman
Dean of college department		
Board of Governors		Organisational heads of fellowship
Senior Pastor	Pastor	
Elders	Deacons	Church council/ Elders
Members of congregation		
Women's pastor		
College president (CEO)		
Board		
	Regional director	
	Co-pastor	

All the leaders who participated in this research have at least one person to whom they are accountable, and at least one person who is accountable to the leader. Accountability structures appear to be in place in all the organisations. The Canadians appear to have more

complex accountability groups, and they have more participants in their detailed organisational structures. They were more likely to mention the secretary, finance people, librarian, administration assistants, etc., than their counterparts in Germany and South Africa.

Table 6.5 Question 2.5 Opinion of the view that leaders are called by God are, therefore, only accountable to God and should not be challenged on their actions or decisions.

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Leaders must feel that they are centred in God's will and have a clear calling; however, if a leader claims s/he is only accountable to God and no one else, that is in itself a form of abuse .	No: people who make this claim have no education and do not understand that God speaks through other people as well.	Do not believe the statement: It is clear in scripture that God gave us responsibilities and that we are accountable to each other and to God.
Definitely not. Accountable to those above, but also beneath (for example the students).	No: all leaders are in danger of abusing power; in the NT the team members were accountable to each other.	We all need to be accountable.
Disagree. Christians participate in ministry and mission; responsibility to challenge leaders, discern error, corrective to dangers, false doctrine and church hierarchy.	No: leaders are responsible to God for their actions and to other leaders and must be open to be challenged by those s/he leads.	Strongly disagree: The Bible tells us to respect those in authority, unless they are instructed to do anything that is contrary to God's Word.
Leadership is a calling, but those with a calling can fall. Leaders should build a team of people they can trust (encouragement, challenge them – leading to personal growth and checks).	Faith in God is personal and, especially in leadership in Christian organisations it is important that people are not exploited by this attitude.	Humanity has weaknesses and temptation abounds; a true leader in the Kingdom of God will seek and submit to respected seniors and appreciate their counsel.
Ridiculous: Called to accountability to lead so as not to undermine people's perceptions of Christ, the Church and the Gospel (the weaker brother); accountability is important to help identify blind spots.	No: in the OT yes, but in the NT servant leadership is taught.	Christian leaders are called by God, and like any other Christian, also accountable to God and to each other.

All leaders who participated in this research agree that they are accountable to God, but also to those with whom they work. The Canadians generally were more expressive with their responses (for example, form of abuse in itself, definitely not, disagree, ridiculous). The fact that leaders are fallible was mentioned four times. The participants stressed the necessity for accountability on the basis that no one is perfect.

The theoretical research underlined the importance of a leader's willingness to be accountable for his/her decisions and actions, firstly to God, then to those from whom s/he receives the authority, and lastly, for the way in which people are influenced by his/her leadership.

The responses from the participants indicate that all have some structure for accountability in the organisation that they lead. The importance of accountability that the leaders stressed is best expressed through the following quotes: "Humanity has weaknesses

and temptation abounds, and I believe that a true Leader in the Kingdom of God will seek and submit to respected seniors and appreciate their counsel” (A).

“As a leader, I must be careful to lead in a way that does not undermine people’s perceptions of Christ, the Church and the Gospel. ... I am one person whose view of life and work is coloured by my history and perspectives, consequently I will have blind spots that I do not recognize. As a result, I need people surrounding me who can call me to account and speak into my leadership” (C).

“The day that leaders think they are beyond accountability is a very scary day. Leaders should build a team of people that they trust around them. People who will encourage them but also ask them hard questions and challenge them. That is how you grow as a leader and how you keep yourself in check. When you do not have this is when you open yourself up to leading through arrogance and you will start to make mistakes and you will lose the respect of your team” (C).

All of the respondents responded negatively to the suggestion that a leader receives his/her authority only from God and is, therefore, only accountable to God.

6.1.2 Data compilation: Trust and forgiveness, love - Questions 5.1-5.3

Because three of the questions on trust, forgiveness and love relate to the attributes of Christian leaders that I have described in chapter three, I have chosen to insert the data from section 6.4 of the questionnaire and present it here.

Table 6.6 *Question 5.1 Three ways in which a leader can build trust in an organisation*

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Communication: open, honest and safe dialogue, seeking and considering diverse viewpoints; regular feedback from subordinates; Being vulnerable and transparent (x3)	Listening to others, be open to be spoken to and be in regular contact with the subordinates; open, good communication (x4)	Able to listen and take action (x2); open communication (x2)
Speaking the truth (no secrets) (x2)	Honesty (x2)	Transparency (x3)
Loyalty	Love (x4)	Lead by example (x4)
Connection: treat people well, confronts control, honours gifts, seek partnerships and appreciates the contributions of each person, value people	Entrust people with responsibilities without unnecessarily interfering. Goes the extra mile for his people and takes concerns/needs seriously, protects them and values and trust them even if they fail. Allow others to make mistakes, and admit to own mistakes. Ability to build relationships	Involve all persons in decision-making, who may have a stake in the consequences of that decision.
Mission clarity: clear sense of purpose and priorities that inspires and engages others to reach beyond themselves	Communicate goals, how they developed and how they should be reached	Vision/Passion Explain why a decision is made that some do not agree with.

Apologizing for past wrongs	Admit to own mistakes	Apologize when mistakes are made
Servant leader: humble role model with convictions; working hard – leading by example (x2)	Responsibility Know own strengths, limitations (also of others)	
Intentionally creating a non-anxious work environment		
Ensure that there is an accountability structure	Be prepared to be accountable and accept criticism	
Ensure there is a clear policy regarding abuse, decision-making and power structures		
		Pray together

Five main aspects were considered to be important for building trust in an organisation, the first being open, honest and transparent communication, involving listening and interaction. Closely connected to communication is the second aspect of honesty and transparency, as well as loyalty, love and being a good example. A third aspect that builds trust is building relationships, connecting with people, valuing them, involving them in decision-making and trusting them in spite of failure. A further way to build trust is to communicate the vision and goals with clarity and passion, explaining why decisions have been made. The final trust-building aspect that the participants agreed on is being able to admit to mistakes and apologize for mistakes or wrongdoings. The fact that the participants responded with this aspect is significant as the free response appears before the following question asks directly for the respondents' opinion on leaders who ask for forgiveness.

Further valuable inputs on the subject of trust-building are: being a servant leader, working hard, knowing one's own strengths and limitations and the limitations of others. Creating a non-anxious work environment, insuring accountability, having clear policies regarding abuse, decision-making and power structures were also considered to be important. Finally, one person suggested praying together in order to build trust in the organisation. Four of the German respondents noted the importance of love, which appears as an open question in 5.3.

Table 6.7 *Question 5.2 How do you feel about a leader who asks for forgiveness? (Tick all appropriate responses).*

If a leader asks for forgiveness...	Response
It shows weakness.	
It shows strength.	CCCCC GGGG AAAAA
It shows insecurity.	
Other	G: Powerseekers often ask for forgiveness, but do not change. G: It shows strength if he really says what he has done wrong and is sorry for. That's good, but not a general ask for forgiveness. G: It reflects trustworthiness and a strong character. A: It shows self-confidence.

These additional comments, especially from the German participants, indicate that sincerity is vital to trust and forgiveness, and not just giving a general apology to smooth out stressful situations. It means being willing to change after receiving forgiveness.

One participant (A) stated: “Ethical leadership is based on trust – therefore, the requirement for all involved is to be prepared to be accountable”. This statement is a close parallel to Stahlke and Loughlin’s (2003) presentation on the relevance of forgiveness, trust and accountability. They state that trust is built on the basis of accountability. This includes carrying blame for one’s own actions (being accountable for one’s own actions), being willing to admit mistakes, ask for forgiveness (which was viewed by all respondents as a positive attribute in a leader) and being willing to forgive.

The respondents provided valuable insights into how a leader can build trust in the organisation. Communication involving sharing a clear vision, reasons for decisions, transparency, connecting with people and respecting them, as well as being a good listener was stressed repeatedly. Trusting people to take on responsibility and allowing them to make mistakes, but also taking their concerns seriously is also an important aspect of building trust in the team. It also means that a leader should admit to his/her own mistakes and apologize where necessary. One respondent even stated that a leader who can apologize shows strength. One respondent shared important advice: Involve all persons in decision-making, who may have a stake in the consequences of the decision.

Table 6.8 *Question 5.3 What is love and how is love relevant to leadership?*

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Sacrificially putting the needs of others before your own: elevates others and demonstrates esteem and value of others, respect, dignity, encourages, discover and live in uniqueness (x4).	Love shows itself through the Fruits of the Spirit. Love is a decision to put others ahead of oneself and rejoicing over the results. It is a gift.	Other person is more important than you; servant leadership (x3); Love is respecting and strengthening others (results in people and organisation blossoming, positive response and support); giving, forgiving, self-sacrificing, God-like, listening and being honest and righteous.
Caring for others while caring for the organisation		Leaders should pray for and over every one they lead, seeking God for wisdom.
Not possible to be a good leader without love, should permeate the work and relationships (x3)	Love for God and people is the prerequisite for leadership. Important for leadership: foundation for everything (love God, your neighbour, your enemy). Leadership without love is dictatorship. Love is a core character component to be successful in a Christian sense.	

	God's love is the basis for living the leading. (x5)	
Love has courage to have hard conversations and make corrections	Love means dealing respectfully with subordinates – to bless him even if it means to challenge him if the person doesn't do the job properly.	
Love does not take sole credit for success		
Love accepts responsibility for failure		Leadership should know and feel the responsibility in the position.
Love never asks someone else to do something you wouldn't do		

Leaders from all three countries stated that love is the basis for leading. It means putting others before oneself, as well as treating others with respect. It is essential for being courageous enough to address difficult situations, and results in feeling responsibility for the organisation and the people in it. Love is the foundation for many of the attributes that have already been mentioned in this section of ethical leadership: for example valuing others, considering others more important than oneself, forgiving others, honesty, and listening to what others are saying.

Just as Kessler (2012) stresses the importance of love being the most important law for Christian leaders, the responses to question 5.3 on the significance of love in leadership, clearly underline that love for God and, ultimately, for others, is the foundation and prerequisite for Christian leaders. This is expressed by putting the needs of others before your own, expressing value and respect for others, strengthening them and listening to them.

Three Canadian and five German responses stated that it is not possible to be a good leader without love. It is valuable to share the specific descriptions that the participants expressed, regarding the practical application of love. "Love has courage to have hard conversations and make corrections; it does not take sole credit for success, and accepts responsibility for failure" (C). It "never asks someone else to do something you wouldn't do yourself as a leader" (C). As well, it was suggested that "leaders should pray for and over every one they lead, asking God for wisdom" (A).

There was, however, one quote that requires some consideration: "Leadership without love is dictatorship" (G). I personally cannot completely agree with this statement. A lack of love could result in a leader dictating to others how and what to do with no consideration for the person. However, in a high-power-distance society, a leader may show him/herself to be a dictator (or even authoritarian), giving clear instructions to his/her subordinates and they may not feel that the leader has a lack of love.

6.2 Power

In the theoretical research in chapter two the term “power” was defined as *dynamis*. It means having the ability to do something. Power can be exercised to bring about positive results, but it can also be damaging. Whitehead & Whitehead (2003) identify five faces of power: power on, power over, power against, power for and power with. With reference to Whitehead & Whitehead (2003) the development of power in an individual is defined. Chapter two goes on to present the six power bases from French and Raven (1959), followed by seven ethical guidelines for exercising power as a Christian leader (Kessler 2010).

In the following section the data received from the fifteen participants is compiled as it relates to the questions on power

6.2.1 Data compilation: Power - Questions 3.1-3.3

This section is made up of one open question on the definition of power, and two further questions based on the power bases from French and Raven.

Table 6.9 Question 3.1 How would you define power?

Canada	Germany	South Africa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ability through authority or influence to control or effect change -The ability to accomplish desired ends -The ability to influence people and generate change -The ability and means a person has to enable or inhibit others 	The ability to enforce and thus to bring to completion his/her will/intent/plans	Strength, ability, control, potential to accomplish the task at hand; has to be harnessed to be productive – love is the key.
Invitation and responsibility to live out God-given gifts, abilities, experiences, and influence in a way that moves an organisation or community forward for the betterment of individuals and the world	Strength given by God and responsible people to a person, so that he can serve God and people to bless others for the glory of God	Responsibility from God, trust from subordinates, privilege not to be misused
	Opposite of human power – power from God; in leadership to be used in dependence on God	Control
	Needs authority for responsibility (human and spiritual) and ability.	Empowering others – not controlling them (often used to control a situation or circumstances)
	Legitimate exertion and influence on people or a group of people to reach a God-given goal	Controlled utilisation of energy in order to produce a positive result

It is important to note that the respondents repeatedly used the term “ability” to define power. Four of the five Canadian respondents used the term, associating it with being exercised through authority, or to accomplish a goal, to influence people (positively or

negatively). The single German response with the term was more in the sense of being able to enforce one's will/intent/plans, while the one South African reference to ability was more in conjunction with strength and control to accomplish a task.

The term "control" was only used by the South Africans; however, three of the five respondents used the terms "strength and ability", once as a one-word definition, and once in the sense of controlled utilisation of energy (controlling the power energy rather than controlling others).

While only one Canadian referred to God (and that only in a sense of God-given gifts), three Germans "spiritualised" their responses: twice as power or strength from God, and once as using power to reach God-given goals. Only one South African referred to God and power being a responsibility from God.

The purpose of exercising power was referred to as to control or effect (generate) change, to accomplish desired ends, move an organisation or community forward for the betterment of individuals and the world, enforce one's will/intent/plans, to serve God and people, for the glory of God, accomplish the task at hand, to control a situation or circumstances, produce a positive result.

In defining power in chapter two, it became evident that power, the *dynamis* (force, strength, power) and the legitimation – *exousia* (authority, permission) for the exertion of the power cannot be separated from each other. The responses from the research participants underline the definition of power and authority, and stress how important it is that Christian leaders recognize the responsibility that they have to use their God-given and organisation-given power. It is a "strength given by God and responsible people to a person, so that he can serve God and people to bless others for the glory of God" (G).

Two responses from the South African respondents add to the definition by defining power as "controlled utilisation of energy in order to produce a positive result" and "has to be harnessed to be productive" with love as the key.

I refer to the table on the five faces of power from Whitehead and Whitehead (2003) in subsection 2.2.1 of this dissertation, and the terms they use to describe how power is experienced and where it is needed. The terms used by the respondents that overlap with the terms in the table are noted in brackets in each of the blocks.

Table 6.10 Faces of Personal Power

Mode	Experienced as	Needed in
Power On	initiative and influence (4)	adult competence
Power Over	coordination and control (4)	organisational leadership
Power Against	competition and conflict	assertion and negotiation
Power For	service (1) and nurturance (4) empowerment,	parenthood and ministry

	enable or inhibit others, betterment of individuals, bless others)	
Power With	mutuality and collaboration	interdependence and dependability

(Whitehead & Whitehead 2003:151)

By actually entering the parallel responses from the Christian leaders, it is interesting to note that their responses on power relate to power on, over and for. The comments that the participants made which relate to power for can also be extrapolated to the power with, in that empowerment, the betterment of individuals, and enabling others is related to mutuality and collaboration. Power against to resolve conflict and deal with competition was not identified by the participants. I would interpret this to mean that leaders do not consider power to be an important aspect that is necessary to resolve conflicts and that power against has a negative tone for them. Perhaps this is why abusers are not confronted.

Table 6.11 *Question 3.2 and 3.3 Power bases from French and Raven: How important are they in leadership, and how conducive are they to abuse?*²⁰

Power Base	Important in leadership Ranking 1, 2, 3 (1 – most important)	Conducive to abuse (up to 3)
Coercive Power		CCCCC GGGG AAAA
Reward Power Base	C 3	CCCC GGG AAA
Legitimate Power Base	C 1123 G 1233 A 1113	G
Referent Power Base	C 322 G 3 A 23	CC GGG A
Expert Power Base	C 112 G 1222 A 122	CC A
Informational Power Base	C 12333 G 113 A 1122	

With the exception of one respondent, all participants agreed that coercive power and reward power are most conducive to abuse. While one German participant felt the referent power base is important for leadership, three others felt it is conducive to abuse. These responses correspond to Hofstede's (2010) power distance dimension. The Canadian, German and South African cultures all have a relatively low power distance, which would result in the leaders being more sensitive to a coercive or reward power base.

²⁰ Canada (C), Germany (G), South Africa (A)

The legitimate, the expert and the informational power bases ranked the highest of the power bases for being important in leadership. The fact that the legitimate power base was highly ranked coincides with the open responses to the definition of power, where power was linked to having the authority to use the power (ability), it is a responsibility from God (legitimised by God), and is defined as legitimate exertion.

The referent power base was not marked as a number one priority, but still considered to be important, especially for the Canadian participants.

The rankings for the importance of legitimate, expert and informational power bases in leadership clearly indicate a high level of relevance for all participants. However, the referent power base is divided in that six participants felt it is conducive to abuse, and six felt it was important for leadership. French and Raven (in Gschnitzer 2008:58) claim that the referent power base – the group and organisational affiliations that a leader has, and the charm and admiration that a leader portrays – has positive, as well as negative references, depending on how the affiliation is viewed. Evidently some of the participants have a negative opinion or possibly have had negative experience with a referent power base, and some have a positive opinion or possibly have had positive experience.

6.2.2 Ethical guidelines

In chapter two I listed seven ethical guidelines for exercising power as a Christian leader, according to Kessler (2010). The feedback from the participants that is documented in this chapter in this section on power and in the sections on ethical Christian leadership supports or relates to the seven guidelines in some form or statement, with the exception of the third guideline, where the research participant places priority on the people in the organisation ahead of the organisation itself. The following quotations from the responses confirm the guidelines:

1. Power is a gift from God.

“Power is the strength given by God and responsible people to a person, so that he can serve God and people to bless others for the glory of God” (G).

Power is “a privilege not to be misused” (A).

2. Remember that every power is on loan from God – and we are accountable to Him.

“We are called by God and like any other Christian we also are accountable to God” (A).

3. Exercise your leadership as a responsible service: serving God, serving the organisation, and serving the people outside and inside the organisation.

“The organisation is not more important than the people in the organisation” (C).

4. Use your power for good or to prevent bad. But never strive for power as an end in itself. Power is “the ability and means a person has to enable or inhibit others”.

Power is “an invitation and responsibility to live out my God-given gifts, abilities, experiences, and influence in a way that moves an organisation or community forward for the betterment of individuals and the world” (C).

5. Which power base are you willing and able to use (depending on your context and your personality)?

Legitimate, expert and referent power bases are the most important, “however, I believe the following elements are as important: being a role model (walk the talk) and leading through his/her character” (G).

6. Respect the culture of the people you lead and especially their perception of power.

“Clear knowledge of the specific traits of what communication entails in the other culture(s) that s/he is working with/has under his/her care. S/he needs to be aware of Dos and Don’ts, cultural values, how conscience is built in those cultures and the need to be able to apply his knowledge professionally” (G).

7. Be open to criticism of your use of power. Ask mature persons for feedback on your leadership style.

“Leaders should build a team of people that they trust around them. People who will encourage them but also ask them hard questions and challenge them. That is how you grow as a leader and how you keep yourself in check” (C).

6.3 Abuse of power

In chapter two (2.5-2.8) of this dissertation, the abuse of power was defined, and aspects of abuse were discussed. Responses to Osmer’s descriptive-empirical task: “What is happening?”, and his interpretive task: “Why is it happening” were presented. Although there are many forms of abuse, the abuse discussed in this dissertation is a spiritual and emotional form of abuse. Vredenburg and Brender’s model of the hierarchical abuse of power provided an overview of a leader’s motives attributes and organisational conditions that contribute to the abuse of power. The attributes that define abusive leaders, the temptations that leaders face, and their personality tendencies were discussed. Finally, the victims of abuse were described followed by the personal and organisational results of the abuse of power.

Due to the length of this section of the questionnaire and the complexity of aspects of abuse that are addressed in this section, an analysis of the theoretical and empirical findings is made at the end of each topic relating to abuse rather than at the end of the section.

6.3.1 Data compilation: The abuse of power - Questions 4.1-4.6

Table 6.12 Question 4.1 How would you define the abuse of power in Christian organisation?

Canada	Germany	South Africa
What the leader thinks should happen because he feels it is God's work, regardless of the toll it takes on others or the organisation, claiming insights or a direct communication from God, Using religion as a form of threat to guilt people into doing what the leader wants (x3)	Very often "wolves in sheeps' clothing"; manipulative on a subconscious level; Having superior knowledge of God, His plans and will, representing God directly leading to followers feeling oppressed and afraid	Over spiritually- emphasizing to control a Christian organisation
When leaders think they are above having their ideas challenged, discipline and working within a democratic frame		Authoritarian Not listening to others – if others should do what you say or else leave; not encouraging others
Use of position of authority for personal gain and to cause harm (physical, emotional or career) to colleague (x2)	When a leader uses his power for his own interest – consciously or subconsciously; own goals are spiritualised	Selfish ambition, seeking popularity, demanding subservience and praise
	When leaders are not aware of the responsibility they carry in their position of power	
	Not capable of solving conflicts – leads to claiming to do God's will but only doing what others say	
		Any action that intentionally places more importance on any one person's value to the organisation.
		Laziness, abusing time off

There are three main scenarios that are evident in the above data table. First of all, respondents from all countries define the abuse of power in the sense of spiritual abuse that occurs when the leader spiritualises his/her actions by claiming the organisation is doing God's work and s/he has insights or direct communication from God, or s/he uses religion to make people feel guilty in order to get them to do what the leader wants.

Secondly, the respondents identified that the abuse of power occurs when the leader uses his/her position for personal gain or selfish ambition. This can result in physical or emotional harm and is associated with the leader demanding subservience and praise, and having a need to be popular. Thirdly, it became evident that if leaders are not prepared to have their ideas challenged, are authoritarian and do not listen to others, they are considered to be abusive.

In chapter two the abuse of power was defined as: "Any abusive behaviour that is expressed in non-verbal cues, words, behaviour, or attitudes which are systematically repeated, destroying the mental dignity of a person, and thus, jeopardizing employment or degrading the organisational climate" (Nunez & Gonzalez 2014:36). The empirical results confirm the value of this definition.

Table 6.13 Question 4.2 List 3 personality characteristics that one would most often find in leaders who tend to be abusive.

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Controlling	Controls others; power for the sake of power	Controlling
Arrogance (x4)	Arrogance	Arrogance
Anger (x2) Sociopathy (lack of critical conscience regarding actions)	Not self-critical	Moody Aggressive Harsh, choleric (who scheme, intimidate, shout, dominate and control) Egotistical sanguine (seek popularity, compromise, no boundaries, swayed by powerful people and money)
Dictator	Not allowing people to have another point of view	Dominant
Lead through fear	Insecurity or fear leading to dominating others to cover the insecurity (x2)	Insecurity (x2)
Inability to admit personal fault (blame others)	Perfectionism, so he does not allow others to correct him; protecting one's image by distorting or withholding the truth; perfection rather than grace Lack of trust in others	Prideful self-importance Egocentric (x2) Perfectionism
Strong, driven personalities	Manipulative by using words or verses from God's Word to oppress, support their case. This leads to individuals becoming physically or emotionally dependent on the leader	Manipulative (x2)
No need to be accountable as a leader		
Forgetful of how Jesus led because of their desire to make things happen		Not Spirit led
Unkind	Lacking love; where leaders no longer use their power to serve	
	Irresponsible	
	A high need for recognition	

In studying the above responses, respondents from all three countries repeatedly stated five main personality characteristics that one would most often find in leaders who tend to be abusive: controlling, arrogant, dictatorial, insecure and fearful, perfectionist (not able to admit mistakes and not allowing others to make mistakes) and manipulative.

Of significance are the responses relating to anger, aggression, mood swings, choleric and sanguine personalities, and lacking the ability for self-reflection.

In chapter two, the characteristics of an abusive leader are discussed. Kessler and Kessler (2017) claim that any personality type could be abusive. Some of the characteristics of an abusive leader found in the theoretical research are self-centredness, creates restlessness, does not accept criticism, gossips, to name a few. Personality disorders are also discussed, and

as well as the powerseekers, insecurity, and a lack of clarity. The empirical data confirms the theoretical data as presented in chapter two.

Table 6.14 Question 4.3 How prevalent is the abuse of power in Christian organisations? (Tick one)

Prevalence of abuse of power in Chr. Org.	Responses
Non-existent – Christians in leadership do not abuse their power	
Occurs occasionally in some organisations, but is not significant.	C AA
Occurs in nearly all organisations.	CCCC GGG AA
Other	C Frequently occurs in organisations and is always significant when it happens. G Because we are all sinners, it happens in every organisation – even in Christian organisations.

All respondents agreed that the abuse of power is a reality in Christian organisations. Although three did not seem to consider it to be significant, nine admitted that it occurs in nearly all organisations.

Table 6.15 Question 4.4 On what level does the abuse of power most often take place? (Tick one).

Level of Power	Responses
Board level (Board abusing leadership and/or subordinates)	CC GGG A
Leadership level (Leaders abuse those directly under their authority)	CCC GGG AAAAA
Financial level	
Other	C Potential is at all levels; depends on the individuals who hold the positions. A In some countries CEO is part of Board, and can therefore manipulate both.

At this point in the questionnaire the participants consider abuse to take place at the Board and leadership levels. None of them ticked the financial level. This becomes significant for Question 4.8 where the participants tell their stories. This point will be addressed under the data analysis in that section.

Table 6.16 Question 4.5 Which situations (events or contexts) within organisations carry potential for leaders to abuse their power?²¹

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Leader-centric, leader superior and given control (isolation from community and peers)	Members and board meetings; Church services; House cells	Being in full control of the organisation and not working with a group
Lack of accountability and oversight; not able to question the leader (x3)	An employee has new ideas to change something the leader is	Lack of accountability

²¹ One South African response was not useful because the ranking method was misunderstood.

	not familiar with; Long-lasting uncontrolled leadership positions	
Performance orientation (pressure to accomplish, get results)	Need for attention, being in the public eye	
Personnel changes	Cliques	
Structural changes	Lack of training and understanding for leadership personnel	Organisation strategic planning
Internal/external threats	Crises that lead to increased stress or long term high workload; leader is at limit with workload but does not delegate as this is seen as weakness	Minister surrounding himself with “yes men” so as not to be challenged
Lack of financial oversight		Financial authorisation
Fear of leaders (for health of organisation, financial stability, own reputation)		

Two main situations within organisations that carry potential for leaders to abuse their power became evident: leader-centric structures in which the leaders do not integrate themselves into their team, as well as a lack of accountability and not wanting to be questioned or accept suggestions from others. Although the financial option in Question 4.4 was not selected, two respondents did suggest that finances do have the potential for the abuse of power. Personnel and structural changes in an organisation also tend to have potential for the abuse of power, as well as pressure to achieve results and high workloads without delegation of responsibilities.

Table 6.17 Question 4.6 What causes leaders to abuse the power in their leadership positions? Please number in order of significance, with 1 being most significant.

Possible causes of abuse	Ranking (Number in order of significance, with 1 being most significant)
Lack of experience (insecurity)	C: 644 (4.7) G: 2335 (3.25) A: 1135 (2.5)
Lack of spiritual maturity	C: 4566 (5.25) G: 1245 (3.0) A: 1257 (3.75)
Need to control the work processes of colleagues for whom the leader is responsible	C: 1113 (1.5) G: 147 (4.0) A: 4455 (4.5)
Personality disorders (e.g.) passive-aggressive, emotionally disconnected, narcissistic, manic- depressive, obsessive-compulsive, dependent)	C: 357 (5.0) G: 1125 (2.25) A: 2677 (5.5)
Satisfaction in having power over others (power seeking)	C: 1335 (3.0) G: 667 (6.3) A: 3366 (4.5)
Ignorance about how to manage others in an organisation	C: 2224 (2.5) G: 2456 (4.25) A: 3447 (4.5)
Lack of clarity of purpose, goals and responsibilities in the organisation	C: 257 (4.7) G: 3367 (4.75) A: 1226 (2.75)

Other	Fear of losing control or influence
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In this section I have chosen three of the options that the respondents from each country most highly prioritised. Canadians prioritised the leader's need to control the work process of colleagues for whom the leader is responsible, satisfaction in having power over others (power seeking), and ignorance about how to manage others in an organisation. Germans prioritised a lack of experience (insecurity), a lack of spiritual maturity, and personality disorders. The South African respondents prioritised a lack of experience (insecurity), lack of spiritual maturity and a lack of clarity of purpose, goals and responsibilities in the organisation.

Thus, all options were prioritised by at least one country, and a lack of experience and spiritual maturity were prioritised by two of the three countries.

6.3.1.2 Vredenburg and Brender's (1998) process model and participants' responses

The empirical data underlines the definition from Nunez and Gonzalez (2014:36). I believe it is a significant issue in that the actions must be systematically repeated in order for the abuse of power to take place. In considering the abusive situations that are briefly reiterated in section 6.3.2 below, it becomes clear that issues that entail complex processes and decisions develop over a period of time and result in the destruction of personal credibility and the degradation of the organisation.

Vredenburg and Brender's process model (2.5.3) portraying aspects of the hierarchical abuse of power presents the main motives and attributes that they believe powerholders possess. Many of the issues that the research participants addressed in their responses to the questions are also addressed by the process model.

Table 6.18 Comparison: Process model vs responses

Process Model	Participants' Responses
Greater control	Authoritarian, controlling
Personnel management	Ignorance about how to manage others
Goal attainment	Personal gain or selfish ambition
Loyalty and obedience	Do not want to be challenged, leader demands subservience
Punishment/favouritism	Cause physical, emotional or career harm to colleague; placing more importance on any one person's value to the organisation
High need for power	Power-seeking
Low self-esteem	Insecure and fearful
High egocentrism	Arrogance, leader-centric structures
Low caring about people	Organisation more important than the people in the organisation
Low ethical sensitivity	Using religion and a personal communication and calling from God to control others (through guilt)
Risk-taking propensity	
High emotionalism	Anger, moody, aggressive, harsh, choleric, sanguine, strong and driven personalities
Secrecy	Poor communication, withholding information
Performance pressure	High need for recognition and attention

Ends/means uncertainty	Lack of clarity of purpose, goals and responsibilities
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The above comparison of theoretical and empirical data shows that the main aspects that make up the abuse of power in organisations that are found in the process model were considered to be important by the respondents. The empirical data also confirms the three temptations that Henri Nouwen (1989) claimed to be significant for people in leadership: the temptation to be relevant, to be spectacular and to be powerful. The respondents used the terms authoritarian (powerful), controlling (powerful), seeking personal gain (spectacular), power-seeking (powerful), and a need for recognition and attention (relevant and spectacular).

A quote from one of the participating leaders in this research reflects the seriousness of the above issues: The abuse of power “frequently occurs in organisations and is always significant when it happens” (C).

6.3.2 Data compilation: Abuse of power – Questions 4.7-4.15

Question 4.7 *Have you ever been personally involved in a situation in an organisation where power was abused, or been close to someone who was in an abusive situation in a Christian organisation? If so, please answer questions 4.8 - 4.15.*

C x1 No: Only one of the respondents was unable to recount a story of abuse. The fact that fourteen of the fifteen participants could recount at least one story indicates the high prevalence of the abuse of power in Christian organisations.

Table 6.19 *Question 4.8 Briefly tell the story of this incident of abuse of power.*

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Christian College program is shut down abruptly after two years. No communication was given as to what target had to be reached in order to keep the program running. Students were told without consulting instructors. Donations for the program were not used as designated. Donors were lied to. Staff members were pitted against each other and were told different stories. Concerns voiced to Board and head of denomination were not heard. No one was prepared to deal with the problems. Results: breakdown of trust, blatant sexism, deceit, lack of integrity, wounded staff and students.	Former pastor asks the present pastor in a church forum: “When will you finally see that your time here is long over?” None of the elders stood up and said something. Everyone was quiet and I led the meeting further. He eventually did resign and left the church.	“Superiority complex” resulting in rude and abusive behaviour toward colleagues. New CEO dealt with it resulting in admission of guilt and reconciliation.
Two financial supporters (also board members) of a private Christian school threaten to remove funding if the principal/superintendent did not change practices he had implemented in the school (behavioural guidelines to curb bullying, disrespect of staff among students) due to the fact that some of the problem students were related to one of the men on the	In a church with a young pastor, there was an elder who was retired from an occupation where he had had a leadership position. After retirement, he took on various positions and responsibilities (Treasurer, preacher, head of counselling) in the church and had a controlling attitude.	Youth pastor and wife criticise senior pastor and secretly elicit monetary gifts by gaining sympathy from others.

board. The principal was eventually released from the position.		
A new college president came during a difficult period. He had a desire and mandate to turn the college around. He created divisions among the staff (ignoring some, befriending or belittling others). He was two-faced and unpredictable from day to day. He was on a power trip to make a name for himself, rather than building on the present foundation (rebuilding a college in his image). He eventually left.	The leader had to be followed without question and did not accept critique, taking matters personally. He manipulated his subordinates through words and actions (portrayed them as being unable, untrustworthy, ungodly)	Youth pastor's wife spreads confidential information gained at board meeting, resulting in strife and lies.
A church split as a result of a group of people in the church who promoted their herbal healing product on people who asked for prayer for healing in church. They would be contacted after church for a sales pitch with the excuse that it was kind to want to sell the product to people who could be healed through using it. Two pastors and their wives instigated the situation.	A leader was new in his position. A subordinate practised the responsibility/freedom that he had had under the former leader, resulting in aggressive and dominating behaviour from the new leader. He forced the subordinate to act outside the cultural context and would not listen to the advice of others.	Church elder controlled decision-making. He spread rumours about anyone who disagreed with him. He also misused finances for his own purpose and thought he was entitled to it.
		Managing director and board member manipulated a project that almost caused the closing of the organisation.
		All threatened new pastor put in charge of denomination setup.

The stories from the participants will be analysed below in terms of the characteristics of the abuser and the main issues in the abuse, as well as the results of the abuse (how the stories ended).

An earlier question (2.2) addressed the behavioural aspects that leaders should avoid. Question 4.2 provided data on the personality characteristics that one would expect to find in an abusive leader. These short stories from the participants contain many of the same terms that were used in the previous responses. Communication is a major issue: decisions affecting colleagues were made by leadership without discussing the issues with them; people felt their concerns were not heard; there was talking behind others' backs.

The stories reveal that finances were mentioned as issues in five of the stories. This is relevant, as none of the respondents ticked the option of finances in question 4.4 where they were asked on which level the abuse of power most often takes place. Evidently finances do play an important role in abuse of power, but, as the stories reveal, finances are closely interwoven with other aspects of leadership, and are underlying motivations to justify the leader's actions. As one leader stated, conflicts result because some colleagues "believe everything must be done perfectly, in their eyes, or not at all, while others feel that it is better

to do something, rather than nothing. In these situations, the person/s that raised the most funding toward the project under discussion used that as leverage to get their way”.

The terms “control” and “manipulation”, that appear in the stories, whether in the form of finances, attitude or through spiritual abuse (people being portrayed as untrustworthy and ungodly). A change in leadership and structure was also an issue.

The results of abuse in the above stories show that reconciliation and healing occurred in only one of the stories. Although not all the participants shared the end of their story, five of the stories ended in people leaving or in organisational splits, as well as wounded people. One Canadian participant stated that the story ended in a breakdown in trust, blatant sexism, deceit, lack of integrity, wounded staff and students.

Table 6.20 Question 4.9 At what point did you realize that this was a situation of abuse of power?

Point at which the respondent realized abuse of power	Response
At the onset of the process.	CC GG AAAA
Realization of the effect on the person who was being abused	C GG A
When others made me aware of it.	C A
When I was personally affected.	CC GGGG
When it was over.	
Other	G: The day after a church forum, and when I went for counselling.

Table 6.21 Question 4.10 What enabled you to identify it as abuse?

How identified as abuse: The person who was abused (this could include you) -	Response
Was ignored	CCC GG AA
Was belittled	CC GG AA
Heard people talking about me (him/her) behind my (his/her back)	GG
Did not receive information about decisions that affected the work/department	CCC GG AA
Was marginalised and/or excluded, though still employed	CCC G AAA
Was discharged with/without reason	GGG
Was not asked for inputs on issues relating to my (his/her) work	CCCC GGG AAA
Other	G: Was left alone and unprotected although I needed help G: Individual was subtly shamed

Table 6.22 Question 4.11 Do you believe the leader realised s/he was abusing his/her power?
Question 4.12 Do you believe the leader deliberately abused his/her power?

4.11 Did the leader realise s/he was abusing his/her power?	4.12 Did the leader deliberately abuse his/her power?
Yes: CCC GGG AA	Yes: CCC GGG AA
No: C GG AAA	No: C GG AAA

Table 6.23 Question 4.13 How did the leader react?

Leader's reaction	Response
S/he recognized the abuse and apologized.	A
S/he did not understand that there could be a problem with his/her leadership actions.	CC GGGG AAAA
S/he retaliated in some way.	CC G
Other	G: Justified it in saying he meant it well and for my good. G: Harshly refused to work out reconciliation efforts expressing the other party had offended God directly.

Table 6.24 Question 4.14 How did you (or the victim in 4.8) feel as a result of experiencing abuse in a Christian organisation? Please tick up to 3 applicable responses.

How did you (or the victim) feel?	Response
Angry	CCC GGGG AA
Sad	CC GGG AA
Demotivated	CC G AAA
Incompetent, questioned my (his/her) capability to carry out the responsibilities	C GG A
Withdrew from colleagues	
Other	C: Offended, exclusion, resentment, hostility, victimized G: It nearly cost me my calling. G: Devastated, depressive, hopeless, alone G: Hurt, misunderstood A: It took 2 years to reconstruct and educate the board and members to return to normality.

Table 6.25 Question 4.15 How did this abuse affect the relevant colleagues? Please tick up to three applicable responses

Effect of abuse on relevant colleagues	Response
They were not aware of it.	C GGG A
They were supportive of me (the victim).	CCC GG AA
They ignored me (him/her).	G A

They turned against me (him/her) and that I (s/he) resign from my (his/her) position.	GG
They supported me (him/her), but encouraged me (him/her) to leave before I (s/he) experienced further abuse.	CC G AA
They did not acknowledge that the action was abuse; They felt it was justifiable behaviour for a leader.	GGGG A
Other	G: One individual was supportive. Another thought s/he would help the victim by telling him/her about a dream in which s/he foresaw the victim's punishment by God through an accident if s/he would not repent of alleged failure/sin. The team worked together to overcome the situation, encouraging the abuser and those who were victims. People had to be laid off and many were hurt. The financial situation even after 2 years is strained.

What can be said about these responses? One Canadian respondent did not respond to the questions in this section because s/he claimed s/he has not experienced the abuse of power. According to the responses from the other research participants, the abuse of power can be identified at the onset of the process. This was the case in eight of the fourteen stories that were shared in question 4.8. Others realised that the leader was abusing his/her power when the effects of the abuse became evident (when the abuse was already in process). Two became aware only when others made them aware. This indicates that it is possible to identify the abuse of power in the early phase, which would lead me to conclude that it should be possible to break the process if organisations are quick and willing to respond.

Questions 4.11 and 4.12 relate to the issues of motives, and it is evident that leaders can be aware of their abusive intentions. They can also be blind to the outcomes of their behaviour, and do not identify their behaviour as being abusive. Although more respondents (eight of them) indicated that they believe the leader realised s/he was abusing his/her own power, there does not appear to be an indication that all leaders would unknowingly abuse their power; it seems that in the above stories, leaders knowingly and intentionally abused their power.

The main ways in which the abuse was identified was by not being asked for inputs on issues relating to the victim's work, feeling marginalised and/or excluded by the leader, as well as not receiving information about decisions that affected the victim's work. Therefore, it is obvious that the victim felt ignored and even belittled. One German respondent said s/he was left alone and unprotected.

The responses in question 4.13 reveal that reflection, recognition and repentance in an abusive situation are the exception, as only one person from fourteen reported a positive resolution of the situation.

The failure to resolve the abusive situations appears to be due to the fact the the leader who was abusing his/her power did not understand that there could be a problem with the actions, and, as a result, refused to talk about the issues of a possible abuse of power. In three cases, this resulted in retaliation, in one case the abuser justified it in saying he meant it well and for the person's good, and a third party expressed that the victim had offended God.

The results for the victim of abuse are clear: anger is the most selected response. Sadness and a lack of motivation are followed by feelings of incompetency. Some respondents added further results such as: offended, excluded, resentful, hostile, and victimized. One person admitted that it nearly cost him/her the calling. Another felt devastated, depressive, hopeless and alone, while still another felt hurt and misunderstood. A further response stated that it took two years to reconstruct and educate the board and members to return to normality.

The responses to question 4.15 regarding how the abuse affected the relevant colleagues cover a broad spectrum. Only two respondents felt ignored, and two respondents felt that the colleagues turned on them and told them to resign. Some colleagues were not aware of the abuse, and still others felt supported (seven responses). Five respondents said they felt support, but were encouraged to leave to avoid further abusive treatment.

It is worth noting that four German respondents and one South African respondent were told by their colleagues that the action was not abusive, and that it was justifiable behaviour for a leader.

The "happy ending", the one unusual ending of the South African story of abusive behaviour, was due to the fact that the team worked together to overcome the situation, encouraging the abuser and those who were victims. This shows that few of the organisations are able to find a positive solution to abusive behaviour.

6.3.2.1 Theoretical and empirical findings of the abuse of power

This section summarises the stories of abuse that the research participants shared in the questionnaire. The questions in this section relate to the personal results of the abuse of power.

In chapter two, I referred to ten most common areas of struggle in the victims of spiritual abuse according to Johnson and van Vonderen (1991). They claim that the victim develops a distorted image of God, and may be preoccupied with spiritual performance, leading to anxiety and shame. This is associated with a distorted self-identity. The victim may have problems relating to authority, becoming compliant or defiant in order to protect oneself from further abuse. Due to shame, the victim may struggle with grace, as well as setting

personal boundaries when others demand actions from him/her. Due to the fact that the victim may have experienced a lack of approval and acceptance for his/her performance, the victim may develop problems with personal responsibility, or, in the other extreme, feels that s/he must resolve all problems. Furthermore, the victim may become introverted and isolated, or even have difficulty admitting the abuse because of carrying guilt for what has happened. The victim may have difficulty trusting again.

6.3.3 Data compilation: Abuse of power – third party involvement - Question 4.16

Table 6.26 *Question 4.16 In the above incident (4.8) of abuse of power, can you identify a “third party” – a person who was aware that the abuse was taking place, and could have prevented the abuse from taking place, or could have halted the process?*

Question 4.16.1 Did this person choose not to become involved?

4.16 Was a person aware of the abuse?	4.16.1 Did this person choose not to become involved?
Yes: CCCC GG AA	Yes: C GG AAAA
No: GG AA	No: CCC G

Question 4.16.2 Please explain.

G: The church leadership could have protected me, but it didn't.

G: Yes and No: because the third party individual had to leave due to unforeseen circumstances after he backed the victim. Later news revealed that he had foreseen upcoming trouble, but was unable to intervene.

A: The previous CEO and others in the organisation were aware of the problem, but afraid to address it for fear of the pain. Christians are reluctant to confront, hoping God will sort it out.

They did not want confrontation.

Some board members insisted to see project report (which never happened), others were manipulated so that approval was given to begin the project.

Did not say anything in order to protect the person involved.

Did not say anything in order to protect own position in organisation.

The above comments indicate that there are situations where a third party is not aware that a colleague is a victim of the abuse of power. At the same time, there are many reasons why people are passive in the face of abuse. They choose not to become involved in protecting the victim, and fail to admonish the abuser although they are fully aware that the abuse is taking place. It becomes evident from the responses from the research participants that colleagues lack moral courage and are afraid to get involved in the issues regarding the abuse of power because they are afraid of endangering their own position in the organisation, they are hesitant to reveal negative behavior that makes a leader look bad, as well as hoping that God will sort it out without human involvement.

In section 6.2.2 I refer to Whitehead and Whitehead (2003) and the fact that none of the respondents used terms in their definition of power that related to the “power against” face of personal power. This reflects the hesitation to become involved in abusive situations or to

resolve conflicts in an early stage. It indicates the need for individuals to learn to deal maturely with conflicts and to stand up against issues that are wrong.

6.3.4 Data compilation: Abuse of power from subordinates - Questions 4.17-4.19

Table 6.27 *Question 4.17 How often do you feel that subordinates abuse their power in their relationship to their leader(s) or the person to whom they are accountable?*

How often subordinates abuse their power...	Response
Never	
Occasionally	CCCCC GGGG AA
Often	G AA
Happens more often than leaders abusing their power	A

Table 6.28 *Question 4.18 If you have experienced that subordinates abuse their power, how was it expressed? (Tick all relevant answers)*

How subordinates abuse their power	Response
Allotted tasks were not adequately performed	CCCC GG AA
The person created conflict in the team	CCCCC GGG AAA
The person spoke negatively about the leader	CCCCC GGGG AA
Other	C: Making appointments to meet with the leader and failing to show up, not following through on commitments, knowing that this would reflect negatively on the leader. G: They physically withdrew by leaving. A: Submission in certain areas.

Table 6.29 *Question 4.19 Do you believe that subordinates have the right to question the actions or decisions of their leader? (Tick up to three responses)*

Subordinates' right to question leader	Response
Never	
Only if asked by the leader	
It depends on the nature of the situation	GGG
Yes, it is important to be direct and open on all issues	CCC G AAAAA
Yes, but in a respectful manner	CCCCC GGG AAAA
Yes, but through the correct channels	CCC GGGG AAA
Other	

Questions 4.17-4.19 were included in this research because one of the persons I had asked to participate by answering the questionnaire refused, stating that he did not believe that leaders purposely abuse their power. My supervisor advised me to address this issue in the questionnaire. More often, subordinates have no understanding of leadership and are critical of their leaders. Therefore, it is interesting to study the responses of the participants.

It is clear that all participants believe that it happens, as the option “never” was not chosen. Three chose the option “often” and eleven chose “occasionally”. One even claimed it happens more often than leaders abusing their power. This abuse of power by subordinates seems to express itself when subordinates do not perform allotted tasks in an adequate manner they create conflict in the team and speak negatively about the leader. Three further comments

from the participants shed more light on the means that subordinates use to “get back” at their leaders: performing in such a way as to cause the leader to look bad, leaving the organisation or submitting in certain areas and not in others.

The responses to the final question in this section clearly indicate that all participants agree that subordinates should have the freedom to question the actions or decisions of their leaders, but discretion should be used as to when and how the subordinate approaches the leader and with which subjects. This is desired in theory, but not always performed in practice.

6.3.5 Data compilation: Abuse of power – organisational results, types of abuse, and temptations to be abusive - Questions 4.20-4.22

Table 6.30 *Question 4.20 What do you believe to be the organisational results of the abuse of power? (Tick all relevant responses)*

Organisational results of the abuse of power	Response
Irreparable divisions between colleagues.	CC GGGG AAA
The organisation becomes dysfunctional.	CCCCC GGGGG AAAA
People leave the organisation.	CCCCC GGGGG AAAA
Organisations close down.	CCC GGG
Abusive leaders are reprimanded for their behaviour and relationships are reconciled.	C GG AA
Abusive leaders are asked to leave the organisation and are replaced.	CCC AAA
Other	G: National orgs. may ask a western org. or personnel to leave the organisation or country. Faith is damaged or people do not understand God anymore.

Table 6.31 *Question 4.21 Which types of abuse have you encountered, either personally or organisationally in your experience as a leader or a follower?*

Types of abuse that leader encountered	Response
Spiritual	CCCCC GGGG AA
Emotional	CCCC GGGG AAAAA
Physical	G
Sexual	GG
Other	

6.32 *Question 4.22 Under which circumstances could you be tempted to yourself abuse the power you exercise in your leadership position? (Tick all relevant responses)*

Temptations in leadership position	Response
A colleague has a personality that I find irritating.	CCC GGG AAA
A colleague is from a different culture.	G
A colleague attempts to give inputs and ideas regarding the work.	C G A
The organisation has financial stress.	C GG
I receive criticism from below or above.	CC GG
Your colleague(s) has/have an opinion that conflicts with your opinion.	CC G A
Other	C: I hope there would not be any circumstance. (This person also had no story of abuse of power). An individual that displays behaviour that

	<p>continually puts my personal image or integrity at risk, violates my comfort zone or causes damage to the organisation.</p> <p>A: Does not think he would abuse the power of the position, but would explain that he carries final accountability, would make a decision that not all are happy with, but would be in the interest of the organisation.</p>
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6.3.6 Theoretical and empirical research findings: The abuse of power

Although I stated in chapter two (2.8.2 Organisational results) that it is difficult to find documented effects that the abuse of power has on organisations, the research responses supplied sufficient data to this topic (validating the decision to include empirical research in this dissertation). The abuse of power has an impact on organisations. The three most selected responses are: irreparable divisions between colleagues, the organisation becomes dysfunctional, and people leave the organisation. Less common results are that organisations close down, abusive leaders are reprimanded for their behaviour and relationships are reconciled, and abusive leaders are asked to leave the organisation and are replaced. Canadian and German participants admitted that organisations close down. One German participant added the comment that subordinates can struggle in their Christian faith if they have been mistreated by a Christian leader. This can occur if the leader is from a western (or developed) country and the subordinate is the non-westerner who is disappointed in the behaviour of an ethical Christian leader.

In addition to the spiritual and emotional abuse that one would expect to be associated with the abuse of power, it is shocking to observe that one German respondent has encountered physical abuse, and two have encountered sexual abuse in Christian leadership.

The final question aroused some very important responses from the leaders who participated in this research. An irritating personality seems to be the main reason for leaders to abuse their power. Criticism or conflicting opinions were also selected by five respondents. However, the additional explanations provided some thought provoking statements. While one leader hoped that s/he would not use any circumstance, another claimed s/he would never abuse his/her power, as s/he had experienced it too often. Is it possible for a leader to determine that s/he would never abuse his/her power? And is this a leader who would not recognize his/her own abusive behaviour?

The final response to this question explains that the leader would attempt to explain any decision and why s/he is prepared to be accountable for the decision in the interest of the

organisation. “I would say that if a leader is claiming they are only accountable to God that this in itself is a form of abuse” (C) (see section 3.2.2.4 on accountability).

I believe I understand New Testament teachings clearly as a process that encourages leaders to not be abusive and followers to go through established processes to address leaders who are abusing their power. I personally believe that this subject is misunderstood and understudied by the majority of German church members. I also believe that subordinates (or church members) are too quick to criticize their leaders causing significant damage to the leaders’ authority in the church at times for minute issues. I believe that, while leaders fail at times, their subordinates have the responsibility to continue to follow their leaders and pray for them (G).

This concludes the responses in the questionnaire on the abuse of power. The next section in the questionnaire contains questions on solutions and is based on Osmer’s pragmatic task presenting data from the participants that assists in answering the question “How might we respond?” The theoretical research relevant to the pragmatic task was not presented in chapters two to four. The theoretical and empirical data relating to solutions is documented in chapter seven of this dissertation: The prevention, identification, and the resolution of the abuse of power in Christian organisations, and solutions for the abuser, the victim and the organisation. Therefore, the data compilation for the questions 5.4-5.9 can be found in the relevant subsections in chapter seven.

6.4 Culture and the abuse of power

Chapter four describes the Canadian, German and South African cultures based on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and Meyer’s low- and high-context communication from her culture map. The following is a summary of the data received from the participants covering these aspects of leadership of multicultural teams as well as a collection of examples of the abuse of power in multicultural contexts.

Table 6.33 Question 6.1 Please rank the following statements from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).²²

	Cultural Aspect	Canada	Germany	S.Africa
6.1.1	Low Power Distance I prefer a leadership style in which leaders and followers are considered to be equal and are allowed equal inputs and participation in decision-making.	1,3,4 (2.3)	1,2,3,4,5 (3.0)	1,1,2,2,5 (2.2)
6.1.2	High Power Distance As a leader, I prefer to make the necessary decisions myself.	1,3,5 (3)	2,3,4,4,5 (3.6)	3,3,4,5,5 (4)

²² (Two Canadian responses were not useful because the participants ranked five of the options rather than ranking each individual option). In each of the response blocks an average of the rankings was made and entered in parentheses. A lower ranking average indicates a higher identification with the cultural aspect.

6.1.3	Individualistic I believe that leadership positions lead to loneliness (It's lonely at the top).	3,3,5 (3.7)	2,2,2,3,5 (2.8)	1,2,3,3,5 (2.8)
6.1.4	Collectivistic Organisational tasks can best be accomplished in teams.	2,4,4 (3.3)	1,1,1,2,2 (1.4)	1,1,1,2,3 (1.6)
6.1.5	Low uncertainty avoidance I feel comfortable taking risks in making organisational decisions.	2,3,5 (3.3)	2,3,3,,33 (2.8)	2,2,3,4,5 (3.2)
6.1.6	High uncertainty avoidance I enjoy change and development.	1,2,4 (2.3)	1,1,1,3,3 (1.8)	1,2,2,2,3 (2.0)
6.1.7	Long-term orientation I need clear rules and goals in the organisation.	2,3,4 (2.7)	1,2,2,2,3 (2.0)	1,2,2,3,4 (2.4)
6.1.8	Short-term orientation I prefer short-term planning.	3,4,4 (3.7)	1,3,4,4,5 (3.4)	2,2,3,3,3 (2.6)
6.1.9	Low-high context communication Communication in an organisation should be precise, detailed and clear.	1,1,5 (2.3)	1,1,1,1,2 (1.2)	1,1,1,1,1 (1.0)
6.1.10	According to my experience, multicultural teams in Christian organisations are aware of their cultural differences and discuss them to avoid misunderstandings.	3,4,5 (4.0)	1,3,3,3,3 (2.6)	2,2,3,4,5 (3.2)
6.1.11	Most Christian leaders have an awareness of their own cultural characteristics.	3,4,4 (3.7)	3,4,4,4,5 (4.0)	2,2,3,3,3 (2.6)
6.1.12	Leaders are not aware and impose their own cultural preferences on others.	2,2,3 (1.3)	2,2,2,3,3 (2.4)	2,2,3,3,4 (2.8)

With the use of the above table of cultural aspects in question 6.1, I attempt to identify how the leaders' responses compare to the cultural expectations from Hofstede (2010:56,94,141,192,255) and the low- and high-context communication descriptions from Erin Meyer (2014:39). I attempted to find out from the leaders the cultural awareness levels of teams and leaders in Christian organisations. Rather than listing the cultural dimensions, I used examples to produce responses that would indicate where the leaders find themselves in the dimensions. I compare these responses to the chart from chapter 4 (4.3) which is reproduced for ease of comparison.

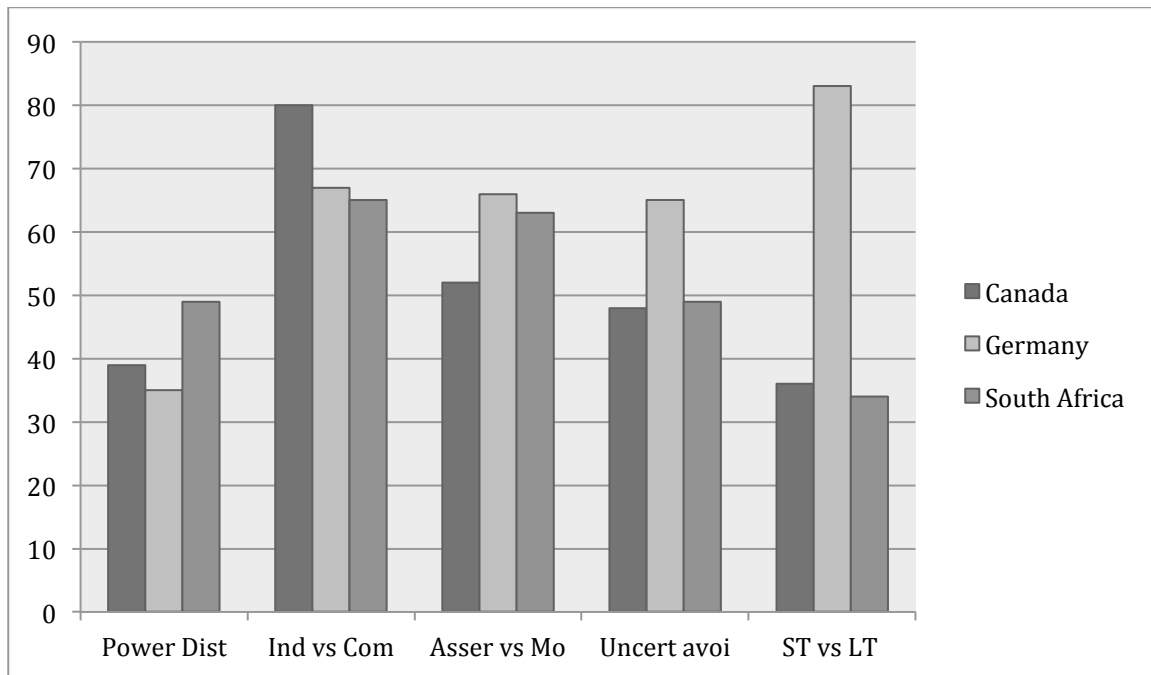


Figure 6.1 Comparison: Hofstede cultural dimensions (Hofstede 2010:56,94,141,192,255)

Questions 6.1.1-6.1.2: 6.1.1 describes a low power distance, and, especially the Canadians and South Africans indicate a ranking that would support the diagram. The Germans ranking supports a somewhat higher power distance. The responses to 6.1.2 (high power distance) support the attention paid to working in equality with subordinates, rather than needing to make decisions alone.

Questions 6.1.3-6.1.4: Although all three cultures are clearly individualistic, only the Canadians indicate that it's "not lonely at the top", and that teams are not necessarily essential for carrying out organisational tasks. The Germans and the South Africans appear to be strong team players, and they see leadership positions as only moderately lonely.

Questions 6.1.5-6.1.7: These options for ranking refer to uncertainty avoidance. The diagram indicates that the Germans have a slightly higher need to avoid uncertainty (they prefer clear rules and goals in the organisation) compared to their Canadian and South African counterparts. All participants feel only moderately comfortable in taking risks in organisational decision-making and all enjoy change and development. At the same time, the rankings from the respondents indicate that, although the German respondents expressed a higher need for clear rules and goals, they also expressed that they are comfortable taking risks and enjoy change and development more than their counterparts in Canada and South Africa.

Question 6.1.8: This question refers to short- and long-term orientation. According to the above diagram, one would expect the responses from the German respondents to have a ranking of at least 3, as long-term planning is an important cultural characteristic. This is the

case, but the Canadian ranking is also in this range (more highly rated than the diagram indicates), and the South African somewhat lower.

Question 6.1.9: Communication: In 4.5.1 it was noted that the Canadian, German and South African cultures fall into the low-context communication spectrum, in that people in these cultures would explain, summarize and document decisions, objectives, and delegation of responsibilities. With the exception of one response, it is clear that the participants in this research would agree with Erin Meyer on this point. The importance of clear communication repeatedly appeared in the empirical data as being a vital part of ethical leadership that prevents or deals with the abuse of power.

Questions 6.1.10-6.1.12: The Canadian responses to these three questions can be easily linked to each other. The higher-ranking averages show that the respondents believe that multicultural teams (6.1.10) and the leaders (6.1.11) tend not to be aware of their cultural differences. This is confirmed by the lower ranking average of 6.1.12 where the respondents agree that leaders are not aware, and thus, impose their own cultural preferences on others.

The German responses indicate that the multicultural teams are moderately aware of their cultural differences and discuss them but the leaders are not aware, and, therefore impose their own cultural preferences on others.

The South African responses are more difficult to analyse, because the rankings to all three questions are in nearly the same range. In multicultural teams there appears to be a moderate sense of awareness and discussion on cultural differences. However, the some leaders are aware of their own cultural characteristics, others are not aware, but impose their own cultural preferences on others.

The empirical results from the questionnaire are in line with Hofstede, but it would be too much to say that they would either confirm or contradict Hofstede.

Table 6.34 *Question 6.2 In your opinion, how often is the perception of abuse of power in organisations related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences?*

Perception of abuse of power related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences	Response
Seldom	CC GG
Often	C GGG AAA
Occurs same in monocultural and multicultural orgs.	CC G AA

The responses to question 6.2 regarding how often the perception of the abuse of power is related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences are shared by all respondents except for “seldom”. The South African respondents selected “often” or “occurs the same in monocultural and multicultural organisations”. These responses may depend on the cultural openness or experience of the leaders. Three German participants and the three South African

participants indicated that cultural differences often are related to misunderstandings. This could indicate that they are more culturally aware. But it could also indicate that the Canadians have a higher tolerance (which is culturally typical for Canada) for cultural differences and do not “blame” culture for misunderstandings.

Table 6.35 Question 6.3 What is the significance of the communication skills of leaders, especially in multicultural teams?

Canada	Germany	South Africa
Must communicate frequently, clearly, and listen carefully. Dialogue is important.	The significance is increasing, very important	VITAL, very important, extremely important
Use all forms of communication – face to face, email, phone ... different people communicate differently.	Clear knowledge of communication in the cultures in the team, do's, don't's, values; direct and non-direct communication	Listen and understand the different characteristics of the culture the people are coming from
Leaders are responsible to have good communication skills and be aware of who individual team members are – as individuals and having unique stories and cultural backgrounds.		Treat all as friends
Attitude is more important than communication skills. This means being willing to unlearn some skills and communicate differently.		Feedback to ensure that the message has been received and interpreted in the intended context
Strengthen communication in multicultural teams by being aware of basic differences: Hofstede's cultural dimensions.		

Table 6.36 Question 6.4 What examples of the abuse of power resulting from cultural misunderstandings or assumptions have you experienced? Please explain in about 5-10 lines.

Canada (four had no example)	Germany (one had no example)	South Africa (two had no example)
Saying one understands an explanation when one actually doesn't in order not to embarrass the leader.	Failure to recognize the hierarchical authoritarian leadership concept in counselling a migrant congregation	Racial stress (prejudice) Assumptions that certain races are favoured and others not respected
A member of a collective culture Christian family commits suicide, but doesn't tell the family in the birth country. In the Canadian culture this would be lying. The pastors in the church needed to learn to be indirect in confronting the issue to safeguard the family's sense of honor.		Salary (financial) stress
		Language considered belittling and inappropriate
	Different work ethics (assumption to be able to work as hard as the leader, and not having the freedom to get rest and restoration)	Time keeping
		Volume of sound levels in worship/preaching
	Expressing that one does not	The culture in power suppresses

	understand the other culture(s) and doesn't care. Comply to my way or leave (arrogance);	the other cultures to empower the ruling culture.
		8 countries represented in one organisation: important to assess whether conflicts are a result of culture or personality. (See comments)

The responses to communication confirm the previous responses regarding characteristics of an ethical leader and building trust in the organisation. One German respondent stated that the significance of communication skills of leaders, especially in multicultural teams is increasing and very important. Over the past twenty-five years that I have lived in Germany, I have observed the significance of the cultural developments that the German citizens have been confronted with, not only in the sense of high- and low- context communication, but also in learning to understand others who are learning the German language and bring with them a different form of communication. Thus, Germans need to become more aware of the significance of communication skills.

Further responses from the participants are significant for communicating in multicultural teams (and are also important for monocultural teams). One respondent answered this question with four words: "Treat all as friends". Although this response may seem simple at first, it is closely related to a response from a Canadian participant: "Attitude is more important than communication skills". This includes a willingness to unlearn some skills and to learn new communication skills. This word covers a spectrum of what other participants wrote. For example, leaders should be aware of the unique stories and cultural backgrounds, and communicate accordingly. They should have an awareness of basic cultural differences. They should listen and understand the characteristics of the cultures that are represented in the team. A significant communication skill for multicultural teams is to obtain feedback to ensure that the message has been received and interpreted in the intended context. Thus, dialogue is important.

Only one Canadian submitted examples of the abuse of power resulting from cultural misunderstandings, even though Canada is considered to be a multicultural country. This may be due to the fact that, even though the country as a whole is multicultural, the Christian organisations represented by the research participants employ, for the most part, English-speaking, Caucasian people who have grown up in the Canadian culture. It may be also due to the fact that, because Canadians have a reputation for being tolerant and individualistic, they do not focus on their differences, but rather on accepting each other as they are. Each culture is allowed to express itself.

At the same time, the examples of the abuse of power resulting from cultural misunderstandings suggest the following conclusions: It is important to learn and listen to the reasons for unfamiliar behaviour. Leaders need to try to understand before being judgmental. It is important to understand work ethics, the attitude towards time management, and the hierarchical structures. I experienced one example when a tour group of black and coloured Africans visited our home. They stated that they are used to receiving clear instructions from their authority in the churches where they perform and were not used to being asked what they would like to do. The leader stated that she did not want to discuss with the church leaders, but just wanted to be told clearly which program was expected and their host felt would be appropriate.

It is of utmost importance that the leader avoids expressing that s/he does not understand the other culture(s) and does not care, or to insist that all must comply with the leader's ways or leave.

Lewis (2012) considers a high level of trust to be crucial to the effectiveness of teams. A multicultural group does not begin with a high level of trust because of their dissimilar values and habits, and methods of communication. Therefore, a community of trust and the willingness for all to follow have to be created in the initial phase of working together. This relates to the respondents' concerns that the leader of multicultural teams should be willing to inform him/herself about the cultures represented in his/her team, as well as developing an understanding of how to communicate with a broad spectrum of people. They should always request feedback on communication to confirm that the message has been correctly understood. Lingenfelter (2008) also confirms the importance of building trust in multicultural teams in Christian organisations by building an understanding for the cultural differences that each team member brings into the team. Plueddemann (2009) stresses that a leader must be willing to reflect on his/her own interpretation of principles of leadership and how s/he interprets scripture to support one's leadership style.

6.5 Conclusion

I conclude this chapter with a summary of the data found in this chapter according to Osmer's four tasks of practical theology as well as a short discourse on cultural issues.

1) Descriptive-Empirical Task ("What is going on?")

In writing a dissertation on the abuse of power in Christian organisations, it can be assumed that it (the abuse of power) "is going on". In order for the respondents to provide data on the topic, they must have experienced the abuse of power in some form, as had 14 of the 15

respondents. In order to answer the question posed by the descriptive-empirical task, it is valuable to consider the stories they shared about “what is going on”.

Some examples were closing down a college program without discussing the issues with the affected staff, threatening to withdraw support if the principal does not behave according to the funders’ expectations, creating divisions among staff because the principal is on a power trip, people in a church promoting a product for their own financial gain, pressure from former pastors or others who want to control church issues, not accepting criticism, acting outside the cultural context, illicitly accepting monetary gifts, spreading confidential information, spreading rumours and misusing finances are all issues expressed by the respondents. This is “what is going on”.

2) Interpretive Task (“Why is it going on?”)

Some of the organisational situations that are conducive to the abuse of power in Christian organisations are personnel and structural changes, the leader’s need for attention or for full control, and not being capable of working in a team. As well, if there is an increased workload and the tasks are not delegated, people may be made to feel guilty for not doing more. A lack of financial oversight, and, as became evident in the descriptive-empirical task, various financial issues are also conducive to the abuse of power.

Although the respondents provided an almost endless list of characteristics of leaders that help to answer the question – “Why is it going on?” – the following are relevant: claiming direct communication from God and, therefore, being unquestionable, leading for personal gain and selfish ambition, being manipulative on a conscious or subconscious level, having a controlling, arrogant attitude, getting angry, being moody, insecure and egocentric.

3) Normative Task (“What ought to be going on?”)

The data collected from the research questionnaire reveals that integrity, honesty, humility, a willingness to be transformed, accept criticism and to keep learning are considered to be that which “ought to be going on” in leadership levels in Christian organisations. Servant leadership, accountability and love are crucial for all leaders to exhibit in their lives and in their leadership, resulting in fairness and just treatment of all individuals in the team. It is important for a leader to be able to admit mistakes and to ask for forgiveness for any wrongdoing. This results in increased respect for the leader.

If subordinates sense that their leader is competent, and all are treated fairly, respect for that leader will be gained. If a leader recognizes his/her responsibility to God and to others for the way in which the God-given power is exercised, and the leader exhibits the above characteristics through his/her relationship with God, one would expect that s/he will not

abuse the power, and that is “what ought to be going on”. Furthermore, leaders must be aware of the power bases that are necessary in order to carry out their mandates, also developing an awareness of the dangers of using a power base in an abusive manner.

Clarity in communication is also vital, and involves communicating in an inspirational, passionate and enthusiastic manner, as well as being a good listener in order to understand the dynamics of those who are working in the team. Organisational accountability structures are necessary to keep leaders and their colleagues in check and to assist them in recognizing personal blind spots.

4) Pragmatic task (“How might we respond?”)

The organisational and personal results of the abuse of power as presented by the participants require a response. Wounded individuals leave organisations, there are divisions in teams, organisations become dysfunctional or even close down, and individuals may even question their faith in God.

Preventing abuse begins with accountability within the organisation. Known abuse must be reported to senior colleagues or to the board, and all team members must be aware of the fact that they have a responsibility and must have the courage and wisdom to prevent and/or report any behaviour that they recognize as being abusive. That requires an awareness of the aspects of abuse. The solutions will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven of this dissertation.

Communication with feedback from the listeners, as well as an attitude of wanting to understand the cultures represented in multicultural teams are important aspects for preventing the abuse of power. Seven of the respondents said the perception of the abuse of power is often related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences. Five participants said that misunderstandings occur the same in monocultural and multicultural organisations.

The responses to the sections on culture indicate that it is becoming more significant to be aware of cultural differences, and to care about cultural differences, to understand one’s own culture on a deeper level, and not to simply disregard those who are different. The cultural issues will be further discussed in chapter seven of this dissertation.

The complex issues discussed in the theoretical research chapters have been analysed in this empirical research chapter by studying the actual responses from the broad spectrum of research participants, not only with regards to culture, but also with regards to age, experience, and occupation. One aspect unites all of the respondents, and that is a passion for their leadership role, and, it became evident, a passion to prevent and/or resolve the abuse of power in monocultural and multicultural teams in Christian organisations.

Chapter seven: Solutions – theoretical and empirical results

Osmer's fourth and final task of practical theology is the pragmatic task. Its purpose is to answer the question: How might we respond? The task determines strategies of action to be able to influence situations in a desirable manner. The theoretical research data relevant to Osmer's first three tasks was presented in the theoretical research chapters (2,3 and 4). The data for the final task is presented by combining the theoretical and the empirical research data in this single, important chapter

The pragmatic task is carried out by presenting strategies that Christian leaders and organisations can activate to prevent the abuse of power in Christian organisations and to be able to recognize abuse early in the process. Solutions for the abusive leader, the victim and the organisation are also discussed, followed by a subsection on solutions for preventing and dealing with the abuse of power in multicultural organisations.

7.1 Preventative measures and early recognition

Ideally, every member of a Christian organisation should have the desire to do his/her part in creating an environment in which individuals are motivated to be spiritual transformed, and to practice love, servanthood, accountability, trust and forgiveness. If each member is aware of the measures that can be taken to prevent the abuse of power, and/or is able to recognize abusive behaviour early on in the process, the abuse of power in Christian organisations does not have to reach the painful end for the victim, the organisation and even for the abuser. The following preventative measures (that also encourage early recognition of abuse) can be drawn from the theoretical and empirical data.

1. Awareness: Leaders and colleagues in Christian organisations must become aware of the personal and organisational situations that are conducive to the abuse of power. This awareness must result in the acceptance that the abuse of power is a danger and a reality, even in Christian organisations, and must become a topic for discussion. It cannot be ignored. Nunez and Gonzalez (2014:48) explain the necessity for developing mechanics and models to expose, explain and deter abuse in Christian organisations. This requires conducting qualitative and quantitative research in order to explain what organisational factors influence abuse, why and how they are influential.

In reflecting on Vredenburg and Brender's model of the hierarchical abuse of power, it would seem fitting to consider the aspects that influence and/or nourish abusive exercise of power. Subsection 2.5.3.1 explains Vredenburg and Brender's (1998) findings as to how the primary causes of abuse of power come from the leader's motives and attributes. This includes the need for control, the desire for personal service, achieving personal and/or

organisational goals, the need for expressions of loyalty and obedience, punishing or favouring individuals, which involves treating individuals unfairly. The attributes that were identified in pursuing the motives are a high need for power with “little self-control, impulsiveness, emotional immaturity, dominance, and manipulateness” (Vredenburg & Brender 1998:1342).

The responses from the Christian leaders in the empirical data from question 4.22 states that abusive leaders are egocentric, not willing to be accountable, to work in teams, or to accept inputs or criticism from subordinates. They tend to incite abusive behaviour. The leaders must be aware of mistreating those with a personality they find irritating.

Furthermore, activating conditions including organisational structures and conditions should be considered in order to reflect on organisational changes that need to be undertaken, eliminating negative factors and thus helping to reduce the contribution of negative inputs into the process. As discussed in subsection 2.5.3.2, Vredenburg and Brender (1998) determined that issues such as a lack of clear decision-making structures in the organisation will result in each individual making his/her own decisions. Uncertainty in the work processes and the goals that they are meant to achieve also influences the abusive process. Further contributing conditions are a culture of secrecy in the organisation as opposed to transparency. Performance pressure from the management level can also contribute to the abuse of power. The responses to question 4.22 in the research questionnaire and the stories in question 4.8 confirm that financial stress is also an important factor that Christian organisations need to be aware of.

The following data from the empirical research shows a strong response from all participants from all countries to the options that were given to prevent or address the abuse of power.

Table 7.1 *Question 5.8 At an organisational level, in order to prevent or address abuse of power, leaders should (tick which are applicable).*

To prevent or address abuse of power leaders should	Response		
offer workshops on what constitutes the abuse of leadership.	CC	GG	AAA
introduce a code of conduct.	CCC	GGGGG	AAA
carry out regular assessments.	CCCCC	GG	AAA
set up an anonymous reporting facility	CCC	GG	AAA
Other	<p>G: Seek to prevent a person with a powerseeker's character from joining the organisation by recognizing it before hiring him/her.</p> <p>G: Regularly invite independent counsellors that report back to the board and to an independent overarching organisation that publishes de-identified results. These reports should be made available to members of organisations as a circular.</p>		

The research participants confirm the value of the above organisational attempts to prevent the abuse of power by highly rating workshops, a code of conduct, regular assessments, and an anonymous reporting facility. Two German participants determined that, in order to prevent the abuse of power, it is important to identify the powerseeker's character before an applicant is hired for a position. Furthermore, counsellors should be brought into the organisation who are independent from the organisation and can speak to colleagues and report back to the board even to the point that the results be published in the organisation.

The importance for leaders to learn about the abuse of power, to develop an awareness of the signs, and making it a topic for open discussion cannot be overemphasized. Awareness can be initiated through the use of workshops, and the organisational discussion can be initiated by the team formulation of a code of conduct and carrying out regular assessments.

This theoretical and empirical information gained through research should help organisations to identify how the abuse can be identified early on in the process, as well as the factors that influence the perpetrators to behave as they do. The model from Vredenburg and Brender (1998:1340) can be used as a basis for reflective discussions with leaders in order to ignite an awareness of abusive factors, processes, and where they could be susceptible to abusing their power.

2. Training: In subsection 2.6.6 insecurity was discussed as a factor that can cause leaders to abuse their power. This insecurity can be the result of a lack of training and a lack of leadership abilities and gifts. Christian organisations should have the goal to train authentic Christian leaders who are capable of leading in such a way so that healthy organisational cultures where people are treated with dignity and respect can develop and be maintained. McClung (1988:4) stresses the importance of offering education in leadership through seminars, educational programs and supervision, especially where organisations place young, visionary people in leadership positions. This would be a means of providing support for leaders, resulting in higher self-esteem or confidence, and reducing insecurity.

Max DePree (2004:Pos.57) emphasizes the importance of a mentoring relationship for one's development as a leader. He is convinced that a developing leader should have one or two mentors, and, later, become a mentor for someone else. Mentoring should include, on the one hand, learning from someone else's experience, and, on the other hand, provide a platform for accountability to another more senior person.

3. Accountability: McClung (1988:4) considers organisational accountability to be the key to preventing the abuse of authority in Christian organisations. In subsection 3.2.2.4 accountability was discussed as an integral aspect of ethical Christian leadership. Stahlke and

Laughlin (2003:Pos.4329) claim that accountability leads to affirmation for delivering the expected results. At the same time, accountability includes addressing and removing destructive and dysfunctional behaviour, which exposes or removes the abuser. A lack of accountability of the leadership to those above him/her in the structure, or within a board or committee can harm healthy working relationships and lead to abuse.

In the same subsection I also referred to Kessler (2012) who confirms that, because human beings receive their authority from God, it is impossible to have authority without accountability for the use of this God-given authority. Accountability should result in reducing the risk of abusing this authority.

In chapter six, the data collection for questions 2.3 and 2.4 relating to accountability showed that all leaders that participated in the research had some form of accountability system in place in their organisation. The following table with the data from question 5.5 confirms the strong support for accountability in Christian organisations. This includes accountability to other persons as well as to a board or similar head. Staff meetings occur on a regular basis, as well as personnel evaluations where colleagues are allowed to voice their opinions. Although one German leader stated that the organisation s/he works for has no regular or formal instruments, one South African leader stated that colleagues may approach the board directly if they are unhappy with the CEO.

Table 7.2 *Question 5.5 What has your organisation already done to prevent the abuse of power within the organisation?*

What the organisation has done to prevent the abuse of power in the organisation	Response
Every person in the organisation is accountable to another person.	CCCCC GGG AAA
All persons in leadership account to the board or a similar head.	CCCC GGG AAAA
We have staff meetings on a regular basis.	CCCC GGGG AAA
Regular personnel evaluations are carried out where all colleagues are allowed to voice their opinions.	CCC GGG AA
Other	G: No regular or formal instruments. A: Regular prayer/staff meetings. A: All persons may approach the board directly, if unhappy with the CEO.

4. Personal responsibility of all members: In studying the data in the above table and in the table below, it becomes clear that all team members carry a responsibility to discuss organisational issues, to be accountable to each other, and to report any signs of a leader's abusive behaviour.

Table 7.3 Question 5.4 What have you already done personally to prevent the abuse of power in your organisation? (Tick all relevant responses)

Personal action to prevent abuse of power in org.	Response
Nothing	C G
I have reported abuse to a senior colleague	C GG AA
I have reported abuse to a whistle-blowing dept. or org.	
Other	<p>C: Spoke with board about the experience and how it was affecting others. The challenge was to do it with love – for the abuser and other colleagues in the organisation.</p> <p>Created an open culture of transparency and honesty. Apologize and created a reconciliation environment for wrongs committed by previous leadership.</p> <p>C: Spoke to the abuser personally, but was ignored. Should have reported it to senior colleague.</p> <p>Expose roles and lack of clarity of power where it is my responsibility.</p> <p>A: Addressed immediately</p> <p>A: Have an open ear to what is happening and review annually people's performance.</p> <p>A: As CEO – deal with it myself, but keep the Board Chairman informed and involve him if necessary.</p>

Only two of the participating leaders had never done anything personally to prevent the abuse of power in the organisation. This is encouraging, as six of them had actually reported abuse to a senior colleague or to the board. One respondent admitted to having spoken to the abuser, but admits s/he should have reported it to a senior colleague. It is evident that addressing the issues immediately and good communication are important: transparency, honesty, apologizing where necessary, explaining roles of colleagues, as well as clarifying lines of power and being a good listener were mentioned.

In chapter six, question 4.16 refers to the personal responsibility that a team member carries as a “third party” to report signs of abusive behaviour and support the victim. The responses indicate that there are a significant number of situations in which a third party could have prevented or intervened in an abusive process, but chose to withdraw. This is due to a number of reasons: avoiding confrontation, a reluctance to confront to protect one's position or to protect others, lack of moral courage (“power against”) and hoping that it will resolve itself or that God will resolve it.

Although the abuse of power is considered by most of the participants to be an important issue in Christian organisations, only two of the fourteen respondents could identify a place in their country where victims could report the abuse and receive counselling. One of the two centres can be contacted if the abuse is not resolved within the organisation.

Question 5.9 Are you aware of any centre in your country that people within Christian organisations who feel that they are victims of abuse of power can contact to report the abuse and receive counselling? If so, describe the system in three brief points.

Yes C: Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) can be appealed to if abuse is not resolved internally. The college has a formal appeal process in place that includes ABHE if necessary.

A: Central Council

No: CCCC GGGGG AAA

Preventing and reporting the abuse of power is the responsibility of each person in the organisation. The abuse of power must be considered to be a serious threat that can infect every Christian organisation and cannot be ignored. Leaders must value accountability and all team members must be prepared to take the risk of revealing any signs of abusive behaviour on all levels. However, should the process of abusive behaviour be allowed to run its course, solutions for the abusive leader, the victim and the organisation must also be addressed in this dissertation.

7.2 Solutions for the abusive leader

From a theoretical standpoint, it appears to be easier to find crisis stories of abusive leadership than it is to find stories with happy endings. The prognosis for the recovery of abusive leaders is viewed somewhat pessimistically. For example, Lovas (2013:75), with 40 years of experience in the counselling ministry, observes that it is unusual for abusive leaders to change their behaviour, due to the fact that the sensitive inner core of the healthy Christian is damaged, in some cases beyond repair. Often the perpetrators do not understand the need for counselling or any form of correction, even though all their contacts and friends are frustrated and exasperated with them. He recommends and encourages Christians to be discerning (1 John 4:1), to test the spirits, and to have the courage to expose the persons abusing their authority and power at an early stage, before they disrupt the fellowship in the organisation.

Kessler and Kessler (2017:74-75) claimed in the past that they have experienced powerseekers who recognise that the abuse of power and authority is sin and have become Servant Leaders. These persons must realise that the abuse was not related to a few individual situations, but rather a pattern of following aspirations that are characterised by false goals. However, on the basis of their experience, they are now more sceptical about the permanence of the behavioural changes that a powerseeker intends to make, resulting in falling back into the old patterns of behaviour.

De Vries (2015:2) would agree that the perpetrator of abuse may require therapy. As the narcissist tends to have feelings of inadequacy, the coach must build up his/her self-confidence. The bipolar candidate should be encouraged to ventilate his/her anger, and self-esteem should be built up by helping to identify strengths. The 'alexithymic' must rectify

interpersonal and communication problems, learning ways to identify and verbalise his/her feelings. The therapy is, however, a task for a therapist or psychologist, and would occur outside the restraints of the organisation for which s/he works.

7.3 Solutions for the victim

In order for the victim to be free from the abusive system, the person must identify the fact that the abuse has and is taking place, and then renew the thought patterns by assessing the situation clearly and rethinking the relationship to the organisation and to further options for service. It is vital for the person to find safe relationships that offer the victim emotional support and personal confirmation in order for deep inner healing to take place through the comfort and healing of the Holy Spirit.

Johnson and van Vonderen (1991) speak of two responses: fight or flight. They give advice on when one should choose fight, and when one should choose flight. Although there is no easy formula for deciding to stay or to leave an abusive situation, the following questions are helpful to decide for flight.

1. Is there a chance that the situation can change? Sometimes there is a possibility that things change, but, for the most part, the chances are very slim.
2. Is the victim supporting something that he/she hates or disagrees with? If so, the emotional health, the potential loss of integrity and the knowledge that one cannot solve the problems are reasons for flight.
3. Does the victim have to be right? Victims often ask why they have to leave when they are right. However, it is not in order to be right in a system that is wrong.
4. Can the victim remain in the situation and still maintain good health? "Losing your spiritual, not to mention physical, emotional and psychological health is not worth the cost. Neither is stressing-out your family or neglecting them to take on a dysfunctional system" (:217).
5. Is it possible to set limits and maintain them in the system? If so, it is necessary to have good relationships with people that hold you accountable. Count the costs of honesty and health.
6. Does the victim believe that God cares more about the organisation than he/she? Believe that God can fix the situation without him/her because He cares more about it than the victim does.
7. Could it be possible that the organisation has to die? The victim should not feel responsible to stay to keep the organisation running.

8. Can the victim listen to reasoning from others who have left? They should listen to the warning of others and contact those who may have been abused in the past and chosen to leave.

9. Can the victim identify good soil where it is valuable and beneficial to sow seeds within the organisation?

10. If the victim came to the organisation for the first time, knowing what he/she knows about the organisation, would he/she have decided to work for the organisation? If no, then it is time to leave.

“Having learned everything you have, you may believe that you should stay and help the system. If you do, don’t be naïve. Telling the truth will mean a fight. Be sure that it is God who is telling you to stay, and that you are not staying for the wrong reasons” (:222). There are also guidelines for the fight response to an abusive situation:

1. The victim must decide whom s/he will serve, but not attempt to please.
2. Be wise about the battle. There will be a fight inside of you, and possibly on the outside. Be ready for resistance, be willing to tell the truth, know the enemy, and stay close to God.
3. The victim must accept the fact that conflicts can be good. However, they must be confronted, healthy systems must be identified.
4. “A spiritually abusive system is a place where people who have *responsibility* to do the job don’t have the authority to do it (:231). It is important to have a clear system of power, authority and responsibility.

It is important for the victim to receive support and counselling in order to process the aspects of fight or flight. Below is a summary of the responses to question 4.14 found in chapter six. The responses from the participants of all countries strongly indicate that the victim experiences a wide range of negative feelings that result from experiencing abuse in a Christian organisation.

Table 7.4 Question 4.14 How did you (or the victim in 4.8) feel as a result of experiencing abuse in a Christian organisation? Please tick up to 3 applicable responses.

How did you (or the victim) feel?	Response
Angry	CCC GGGG AA
Sad	CC GGG AA
Demotivated	CC G AAA
Incompetent, questioned my (his/her) capability to carry out the responsibilities	C GG A

Withdrew from colleagues	
Other	C: Offended, exclusion, resentment, hostility, victimized G: It nearly cost me my calling. G: Devastated, depressive, hopeless, alone G: Hurt, misunderstood A: It took 2 years to reconstruct and educate the board and members to return to normality.

Oakley and Kinmond (2013:92-93) established in their research (in the United Kingdom) on spiritual abuse that victims of abuse in a religious environment find it difficult to trust others with their story of abuse and, as a result, do not seek support and therapy. At the same time, due to a lack of training for therapists in this specific area of abuse, it is difficult for therapists to recognize and provide adequate therapy. Often Christians do not feel free to contact Christian therapists. They have lost their trust in Christian systems because these spiritual systems are responsible for their pain in the first place.

Anne Graham Lotz (2013) writes about spiritual abuse based on the story of Hagar in the Book of Genesis. Throughout the book she has a recurring thought that is valuable for victims in a spiritual system. Wounded people often think “that if God has allowed you or those you care about to be treated in such an ungodly way by those who identify with Him, then you want no part of them – *or Him*” (Graham Lotz 2013:126). Her ongoing appeal is: “God loves you. Don’t reject Him because others have rejected you or disappointed you. He is not like them” (:166).

This is an important aspect for the victims of the abuse of power in Christian organisations. Either the victims will leave the organisation and join another Christian organisation, or they will keep their faith, but distance themselves from another Christian organisation to protect themselves from repeated injury, or they will reject other Christians and their faith in God.

In a presentation on Spiritual Abuse on May 3, 2017²³, Lisa Oakley presented effective ways in which one can respond to victims. First of all, it is important to listen to the victim and to indicate to the victim that s/he is being taken seriously. One must not attempt to defend the organisation. Secondly, it is important to assure the victim of support and help, as well as offering help with finding external support if necessary. The next response is providing healing for the victim by hearing and believing his/her story. Furthermore, the victim must know that one understands.

²³ The German Evangelical Alliance (Evangelische Allianz Deutschland) held a workshop on Spiritual Abuse on May 3-4, 2017. Approximately 25 experts on the topic of spiritual abuse were invited. I presented the research findings specifically relating to the abuse of power in multicultural Christian organisations.

A fifth response is to be careful with using scripture with instruction as to what the victim should do. This includes avoid the “Matthew 18 Principle”: to go and speak with the perpetrator. Oakley illustrates this by stating, that one would never require the victim to go to the perpetrator in a sexual abuse case. The person should not be told to forgive and carry on, as healing must take place and this requires an unpredictable period of time.

The next response from Oakley (2013) is to provide clear information about one’s response. One must communicate clearly to the victim about the plan for dealing with the abuse. The victim must be made to understand that a disclosure of the abuse may be necessary.

Finally, it is important that Christian organisations have a policy on spiritual abuse. Forming a policy requires a church or an organisation to discuss the aspects of the abuse of power in Christian organisations.

One way to help victims is to set up whistle-blowing or clearing centres. Question 5.9 asks the research participants if they are aware of any centre in their country where the people within Christian organisations can report to and receive counselling, should they feel that they are victims of the abuse of power. One Canadian explained that, within the organisation, there is a department that deals with situations that cannot be resolved internally. One South African said that one could report to the central council of the church denomination. None of the other participants could name a centre outside of their organisation where the abuse of power could be reported and counselling could be received.

Oakley (2013) determined that the victims of the abuse of power do not feel comfortable to share their story with people they know. It is vital that clearing centres or whistle-blowing departments are set up and the service is publicized to make people aware of this service.²⁴ This is a centre where abusive behaviour can be reported in order to expose the abuse and to guarantee that it will not be repeated. Victims can receive professional counselling in a confidential environment. Contact with third parties involved in the abuse is only made with the consent of the victim. It is important to listen carefully to the victim’s story and to determine whether there is a possibility or necessity for intervention.

7.4 Solutions for the organisation

One respondent stated that the results of the abuse of power affected the organisation in such a drastic manner that it took two years to reconstruct and educate the board and for members to return to normality. An organisation must deal with the results of the abuse of power on

²⁴ The Evangelische Allianz in Deutschland (Evangelical Alliance in Germany) set up a whistle-blowing or clearing-centre in 2016. (see:<http://www.ead.de/die-allianz/clearing-stelle/html>)

various levels: they must deal with the effects that it has on the colleagues of the victim. A board or governing body in the organisation must deal with the perpetrator.

Table 7.5 Question 5.6 How do Christian organisations that you personally have knowledge of deal with abusive leadership? (Tick all relevant responses)

How Christian orgs. deal with abusive leadership	Response
The abuse is ignored.	CC GGGG A
Leaders are warned that their behaviour is inappropriate.	CC G AA
Leaders are confronted and they are required to correct their actions.	CC GG AAA
Leaders are removed from their position.	CC GG AA
Subordinates are reprimanded and advised to respect the abusive leaders.	C GGG
Other	C: Unsure: Either abuse is ignored and nothing happens; or abuse is confronted in an appropriate and restorative manner so that it does not become known to the larger community. A: Most of the time organisations do not want to tackle the abusiveness (not Christian-like). A: No personal knowledge of such an event.

It is surprising that, in spite of the actions that are taken to prevent or stop the abuse of power in Christian organisations, seven of the respondents ticked the response in question 5.6: The abuse is ignored. One respondent stated that most of the time, organisations do not want to tackle the abusiveness because it is not ‘Christian-like’. People have an image of how Christians should live in harmony, and this image is damaged if abusive situations are brought to light. At the same time, in other situations, the leaders have evidently experienced cases where leaders are confronted, required to correct their actions, and even removed from their position. Some participants felt that subordinates should be reprimanded and advised to respect the leadership. There is a strong agreement on the point that abusive leaders should be confronted and given an opportunity to correct their actions, even if it requires counselling or mentoring. This reflects the best case scenario, because, as the responses to questions 4.11-4.13 indicate that abusive leaders are not always aware of their behaviour, and often the leader does not see a need to reflect on his/her actions and refuses to talk about the issues.

The above responses from the participants clearly reflect the responses that Christian organisations should have in dealing with abusive leaders. The responses indicate that abusive behaviour cannot be allowed to run its course. The abusive leaders should be warned, monitored, confronted, but given an opportunity to change (even with counselling or mentoring). Only four Canadian responses and two Africans indicated that they felt that leaders should be removed from their position immediately. At the same time, two of the

German respondents added that abusive leaders should be distanced or removed from the organisation, or reassigned.

Table 7.6 Question 5.7 How do you think Christian organisations *SHOULD* deal with abusive leaders? (Tick up to three relevant responses)

How Christian leaders <i>should</i> deal with abusive leaders	Response
Let it run its course.	
Leaders should be warned and their actions monitored.	CC GGG AAA
Leaders should be confronted and given an opportunity to correct their actions, even if it requires counselling or mentoring.	CCCCC GGGG AAAAA
Leaders should be removed from their position immediately.	CCCC AA
Subordinates should be reprimanded and advised to respect the leadership.	A
Other	C: Depending on the form and extent of the abuse, responses should vary from warnings to leaders, that leaders should be removed from their position or even reported to authorities. D: Distancing them from the organisation or even closing the organisation D: Admonished if behaviour is repeated, but also assisted to deal with weakness(es). If not successful, then reassigned or removed.

To close this subsection on what an organisation should do when the abuse of power occurs in the organisation, it is helpful to consider these final thoughts. “When mobbing is justified in a spiritual context, it creates confusion about Christian values and what is truly important in an organisation that claims to work for the glory of God. All people merit respect, consideration of individual differences, and human dignity” (Nunez & Gonzalez 2014:45). Nunez and Gonzalez stress that it is crucial that the issue of abuse in Christian organisations be addressed and brought into the open, requiring qualitative and quantitative research to be conducted in these organisations, looking for mechanisms and models to explain what organisational factors influence abuse, why and how they are influential, leading to healthy organisational cultures where leaders treat their people with dignity and respect.

Marlena Graves (2009) addresses the issues of abusive leadership from the angle of those responsible for the leader. Evangelical churches are resolute in holding their leaders accountable for sexual sins, and, rightly so. Leaders should be models and good examples. She states: “I’ve found that while most often we don’t turn a blind eye to sexual sin or sins like embezzlement, we often excuse or gloss over leaders’ abuse of power” (Graves 2009:2). She believes that the reasons for this inconsistency are firstly, fear of being removed from the organisation or position. Secondly, these leaders may be good fundraisers, dynamic, and talented in some area of ministry. Thirdly, people are fearful of what will happen to the

organisation if one speaks up (and, she states, that with good reason). In Christian organisations the colleagues believe they should avoid speaking negatively about others (no “power against”) and avoid fights, this allows the problem to fester until it ruptures. This nurtures the abusive leader, rather than confronting and then helping him/her. It is essential that members of Christian organisations renew their attitude towards the realities of the abuse of power in order to be able prevent or resolve abusive situations.

7.5 Solutions for multicultural organisations

In this final subsection of chapter seven, solutions for multicultural organisations are discussed under the aspects of cultural awareness, communication and trust-building attitudes.

1) Cultural awareness: Richard Lewis (2012) views cultural awareness to be the initial step in leading multicultural teams to maximize their potential. This means that the leader must begin by identifying the cultural characteristics of the team members and viewing the cultural diversity as potential and not as a hindrance. “National strengths, weaknesses, insights, and blind spots must be considered; taboos and cultural black holes must be taken into account”. The team’s purpose, in all its diversity, must be clarified.

In my experience in working in a multicultural environment, I have never experienced a situation where the leader informed him/herself about the cultures represented in the team and discussed the differences in order to find a common ground to create a healthy working environment. As was determined from the following empirical data from chapter six, the research participants indicated that there is a lack of understanding of one’s own cultural characteristics, and also a lack of awareness of the cultural differences in the team, as shown in the higher averages in the results for Question 6.1.12 (1.3,2.4,2.8). This results in the responses to 6.1.12, in that leaders impose their own cultural preferences on others.

Table 7.7 Cultural awareness of leaders (Canada, Germany, South Africa)

		Canada	Germany	South Africa
6.1.10	According to my experience, multicultural teams in Christian organisations are aware of their cultural differences and discuss them to avoid misunderstandings.	345 (4.0)	13333 (2.6)	22345 (3.2)
6.1.11	Most Christian leaders have an awareness of their own cultural characteristics.	344 (3.7)	34445 (4.0)	22333 (2.6)
6.1.12	Leaders are not aware and impose their own cultural preferences on others.	223 (1.3)	22233 (2.4)	22334 (2.8)

Table 7.8 Question 6.2 In your opinion, how often is the perception of the abuse of power in organisations related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences?

Perception of abuse of power related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences	Response
Seldom	CC GG
Often	C GGG AAA
Occurs same in monocultural and multicultural orgs.	CC G AA

With regards to the results of question 6.2, seven of the 15 respondents related misunderstandings due to cultural differences to the perception of the abuse of power. This result is strong enough that it deserves the attention that Lewis (2012) gives it. In order to prevent or resolve the abuse of power in multicultural Christian organisations, it is of utmost importance for the leaders to be aware of their own cultural characteristics, to inform themselves of the cultural characteristics represented in their teams, and to lead open discussions in the team in order to be able to create a productive working environment that utilises the potential within the group.

This diagram below illustrates the principle of adopting the cultural characteristics from each culture represented in the team in order to form an organisational culture that can effectively utilise appropriate characteristics to reach the team's potential. The most effective means of producing this optimal culture is through individual- and cross-cultural awareness. Leaders have a responsibility to understand the cultures, to lead the relevant dialogues in the team and to incorporate aspects of each culture in the organisational culture.

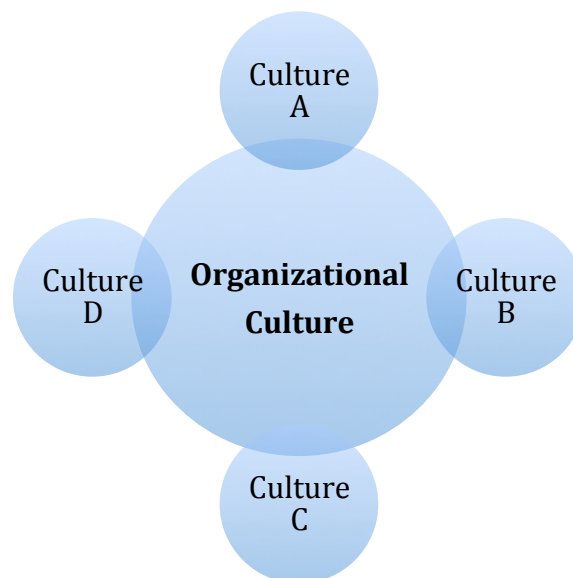


Figure 7.1 Creating an organisational culture in a multicultural team

2) Communication: One of the German research participants stated that: “The significance of communication skills of leaders in multicultural Christian organisations is increasing”. In chapter four of this dissertation the diversity and significance of communication a

multicultural context became evident. In subsection 4.5.1 I presented Erin Meyer's (2014) low- and high-context communication and in subsection 4.5.2 I presented the cultural communication patterns from Lewis (2015). Cultural awareness in relationship to communication is of great significance. The respondents provided further solutions for improving communication in multicultural teams:

1. Must communicate frequently, clearly, and listen carefully. Dialogue is important.
2. Use all forms of communication – face to face, email, phone ... different people communicate differently.
3. Leaders are responsible to have good communication skills and be aware of who individual team members are – as individuals and having unique stories and cultural backgrounds.
4. Strengthen communication in multicultural teams by being aware of basic differences.
5. Ask for feedback to ensure that the message has been received and interpreted in the intended context.

3) Trust-building attitude: One respondent (C) claimed that “attitude is more important than communication skills. This means being willing to unlearn some skills and communicate differently”. Another said that the leader (A) should “treat all as friends” in the sense that a leader should not differentiate between the cultural backgrounds of the team members, but rather be fair and treat all in a friendly manner. Not only must a leader develop an understanding for other cultures, s/he must develop and reflect a deep respect for the other cultures. This attitude should build trust between the members of the organisation. Lewis (2015:8) states that, while some cultures trust others until it is shown that others cannot be trusted, other cultures trust others after determining that his/her trust has been earned.

In subsection 3.3.3 I referred to Pluedemann (2009) who views situational leadership as an important asset for building trust in leading multicultural teams. Situational leadership builds trust in the multicultural team, but requires an attitude of willingness to learn a high level of flexibility, adaptability, humility and sensitivity. He states that multicultural leaders have to be flexible and adapt their leadership style according to the situation in which they find themselves. This does not mean that they compromise their Christian principles. However, it means adapting their approach.

To conclude this subsection on solutions for the abuse of power in multicultural organisations, I refer again to subsection 3.3.3 where I presented three guidelines that Pluedemann (2009:64) lays out for resolving leadership tensions in multicultural teams. The leader must be willing to reflect on unconscious cultural values and not hold on to what one considered as the norm. The leader must be willing to discover the cultural values of others.

Finally, Plueddemann explains how leaders in each culture explain scripture in the context of the culture, through their cultural perspective. He challenges leaders to consciously discover universal principles of leadership, rather than interpreting scripture to support their leadership style.

The complexity of this process becomes evident when considering the difference between cultural practices and cultural values (which are closely related to the world view of a culture). Cultural practices are the external expressions that we can experience through our sense of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. However, linked to these expressions are the values and cultural ideals that create the philosophy of life and are linked to the external expression. Thus, values are “subconscious assumptions” (:71) (not observable) that affect how people act (observable). The leader’s willingness to reflect on these subconscious cultural values to determine the motivation behind the observed actions can reduce tensions in multicultural teams. “Globalization means people are looking more and more alike on the outside, but the inner layer of cultural values hasn’t changed very much” (:74).

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the question of the pragmatic task - How must we respond? - has been addressed by presenting the theoretical data and expanding it with the empirical data from the respondents. It began with the subsection on prevention and early recognition of the abuse of power, underlining the importance for organisations and individuals to become aware of abusive situations and the importance of understanding the situations and factors that are conducive to abusive situations. Leadership training is also necessary in order to reduce insecurity in leaders and to prepare them for leadership responsibilities. Leadership training should include the topics relevant to the abuse of power. A further important aspect is the necessity of accountability within the organisation. Finally, the responsibility that each individual in an organisation has to prevent or recognize the abuse of power in the organisation and the necessity for the individuals to speak up was discussed.

The subsection on prevention and early recognition was followed by solutions to the abuse of power, specifically for the abusive leader and the victim. The effects that the abuse of power has on organisations, and how organisations should deal with the abuse of power and abusive leaders within the organisation, were presented. The chapter concludes with a subsection on solutions for multicultural organisations, drawing from the theoretical and empirical data that indicated the importance of the aspects of cultural awareness, attitude, trust and communication.

Chapter eight: Summary of research and conclusions

A summary of the theoretical and empirical research and the conclusions drawn from the data constitute this final chapter of the dissertation. The chapter begins with a discussion on recommendations for future research, followed by a subsection in which I answer the research questions as presented in subsection 1.4.2 in chapter one. It is followed by a summary of my personal reflections on the research process on the topic of the abuse of power in Christian organisations, and through my personal interaction with the cultures represented in this dissertation.

8.1 Recommendations for future research

In the introduction in chapter one I wrote that I had been told by many who inquired about my research topic that “I have a story”. The theoretical research confirmed that the issues regarding the abuse of power in Christian organisations are significant. The empirical analysis of the stories and the data confirmed and emphasised the significance of these issues. Furthermore, during the research process, the researcher is “tuned in” to the voices that are speaking on the issues of the abuse of power. As a result, in the course of the research process there are relevant topics that have emerged that warrant further research attention.

8.1.1 Developing a basis for cultural self-reflection and team discussion

In the course of carrying out this research, it has become evident that effective communication is an essential issue for effective teamwork and the prevention of the abuse of power in Christian organisations. It also became clear that communication is influenced by the culture of individuals. Therefore, it follows that an effective leader should create a foundation on which a team discussion on culture can take place.

One example of a tool that is helpful in opening this discussion is available online from the *Harvard Business Review*.²⁵ This online questionnaire with 25 questions is constructed by Erin Meyer (2014) whose low- and high-context communication was discussed in subsection 4.5.1. It covers the aspects of communication, evaluation, persuading, leading, deciding, trusting, disagreeing and scheduling. Individuals can complete the questionnaire online and submit their cultural context. The tabulated results indicate the participant’s position on a scale from the results against the norm for the given cultural context. The development of a tool of this nature can be helpful in inciting personal reflection on one’s own culture and valuable group discussion about the individuals’ results.

²⁵ Website: <https://hbr.org/assessment/2014/08/whats-your-cultural-profile>

8.1.2 Personality versus Culture

As previously noted, in the data compilation in subsection 6.5.1 (question 6.4) a respondent (A) indicated that s/he has eight cultures represented in the team, and in the case of a conflict, s/he must consider how personality and culture influence the situation at hand. This could be a valuable research topic, especially for multicultural teams. A further issue that should be researched is the connection between character and spiritual immaturity as it relates to the abuse of power.

8.1.3 Third party

In subsection 6.3.3 the data regarding third party knowledge of the abuse of power was collected. Eight respondents claimed that there were colleagues who were aware that the abuse was in process. Seven of these colleagues chose not to become involved. Further research should be carried out on the abuse of power in Christian organisations in which team members are interviewed on the topic of abuse, possible reasons why colleagues decided not to become involved and their lack of a sense of responsibility for the victim, the organisation and even the abusive leader.

8.1.4 Awareness of the abuse of power in organisations

My research findings led me to ask further questions that must be answered in order to address the issues in Christian organisations. For example: How aware are Christian organisations of the abuse of power? How can this be determined and what can be done to make people aware, to train them to become aware and to deal with the abuse of power? How can multicultural Christian organisations become aware of the necessity to go beyond the general sense of cultural differences and reach deeper into the available cultural research and tools to open the discussion on culture and the abuse of power? These questions could possibly be answered through further research in which a large number of organisations and their members participate in quantitative research (which would already aid in developing a greater awareness of the aspects of the abuse of power).

8.2 Research questions

In the first and introductory chapter, the research questions were stated (subsection 1.4.2). Because the main research question is answered with the help of the four sub-questions, I will answer the four sub-questions, providing concluding responses that will, in turn, answer the main research question.

Based on the premise that the abuse of power occurs in Christian organisations (the research data confirms that it does occur), the theoretical and empirical research attempts to answer the following main research question with the help of the four sub-questions:

What constitutes the abuse of power of leaders in Christian organisations in the three cultures and how can it be addressed?

1. What is the abuse of power, especially in Christian organisations, and what are its results?
2. What role does culture play in the abuse of power?
3. What do the results of the empirical research reveal about actual abuse in multicultural teams in Christian organisations, and do these results confirm the insights contained in the relevant literature?
4. What strategies can be used to effectively prevent or deal with the abuse of power in different cultural contexts in Christian organisations?

8.2.1 Question 1: What is the abuse of power, especially in Christian organisations, and what are its results?

In chapter two the abuse of power was defined as: “Any abusive behaviour that is expressed in non-verbal cues, words, behaviour, or attitudes which are systematically repeated, destroying the mental dignity of a person, and thus, jeopardizing employment or degrading the organisational climate” (Nunez & Gonzalez 2014:36). The research respondents defined the abuse of power in Christian organisations: Spiritual abuse occurs when the leader spiritualises his/her actions by claiming the organisation is doing God’s work and s/he has insights or direct communication from God, or s/he uses religion to make people feel guilty in order to persuade them to follow. The respondents also identified that the abuse of power occurs when the leader uses his/her position for personal gain or selfish ambition. This can result in physical and emotional harm, is associated with the leader demanding subservience and praise, and can be caused by having a need to be popular. Furthermore, it became evident that if leaders are not prepared to have their ideas challenged, are authoritarian and do not listen to others, they are considered to be abusive.

The results of the abuse of power in Christian organisations are far-reaching. First of all, the victim can suffer a range of emotions that reflect the spiritual and emotional struggle: anger, sadness, lack of motivation, feelings of incompetency, withdrawal, resentment, devastation, depression, pain, feeling offended and excluded, to name a few. Secondly, the colleagues may or may not recognize that the abuse is taking place. Although some may be supportive, they may not get involved because of fear of abuse or of exposing another Christian’s abusive behaviour and the consequences s/he may have to bear. Some may even tell the victim that the abusive behaviour is justifiable for the leader and the victim should submit to the leadership.

Finally, the organisation suffers. Especially people in Christian organisations are afraid of exposing the abuse of power because there are those who do not believe that this can take place in Christian organisations. They do not want to discolor the organisation's image. Within the team there is tension, and often people leave the organisation. In extreme cases, the organisation must be closed down. As one respondent (C) commented: "The abuse of power occurs frequently in organisations and is always significant when it happens."

8.2.2 Question 2: What role does culture play in the abuse of power?

The research participants were divided on their response to this question. Question 6.2 asked: In your opinion, how often is the perception of the abuse of power in organisations related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences? Two Canadians and two Germans felt that it seldom plays a role. One Canadian, three Germans and two South Africans ticked "often", and the others felt that the abuse of power occurs the same in monocultural and multicultural organisations.²⁶

The work of Lewis (2012), Lingenfelter (2008) and Plueddemann (2009) confirms that culture plays a significant role in the abuse of power. Based on his experience in Christian leadership in cross-cultural settings, Lingenfelter (2008) determined that a willingness to learn and accept the cultural behaviour of others is essential to avoid disagreements that lead to judging and condemning the spirituality of others and destroying chances for effective team ministry. This includes listening to each other with respect and acceptance. Lewis (2012) considers the building of trust to avoid the abuse of power to be essential in multicultural teams. The leader of multicultural teams should be willing to inform him/herself about the cultures represented in his/her team, as well as developing an understanding of how to communicate with a broad spectrum of people. They should always request feedback on communication to confirm that the message has been correctly understood. Lingenfelter (2008) also confirms the importance of building trust in multicultural teams in Christian organisations by building an understanding for the cultural differences that each team member brings into the team.

8.2.3 Question 3: Abuse in multicultural teams

What do the results of the empirical research reveal about actual abuse in multicultural teams in Christian organisations, and do these results confirm the insights contained in the relevant literature? There are results that can be deducted from the examples of the abuse of power from cultural misunderstandings or assumptions that the respondents shared. The first

²⁶ This supports my impression that the South Africans live in and experience the multicultural environment. Hence, they are more sensitive to cultural issues.

example is related to communication: a person receives instructions, says s/he understands, but does not fulfil the duties as instructed. The person did not understand, but did not want to tell the leader, as s/he did not want to embarrass the leader by giving him/her the impression the s/he had not explained it adequately.

In another example, a church told family members that they are lying, because they didn't tell their family in their home country that the son had committed suicide. The church leadership had to confront the family in such a way as to protect the family's honour and had to understand that the family members were not holding the information to be dishonest, but to maintain their honour with their family in the foreign culture. If the church leadership does not attempt to understand the culture of this family people are offended and feel unfairly judged.

A further example results in stress in counselling a migrant congregation. The counsellor did not understand the hierarchical authoritarian leadership concept in the culture and provided the wrong advice for resolving problems in the group.

Varying work ethics in multicultural groups results in stressful relationships. The varying work ethics express themselves through being on time, assuming that all subordinates will work as hard as the leader and will not be allowed to get adequate rest and have free time.

As discussed in chapter seven, attitude is a serious issue for some respondents. If a leader expresses that s/he does not understand the other culture(s) and does not wish to understand, and expresses that all must comply or leave, the results are divisions and hurts. This may be expressed through language that is considered by others as belittling and inappropriate. This may also be the result of assumptions that certain races are favoured and others are not respected.

8.2.4 Question 4: Strategies in different cultural contexts

What strategies can be used to effectively prevent or deal with the abuse of power in different cultural contexts in Christian organisations?

Subsection 7.3 answers this subquestion in detail. Three strategies for the prevention or resolution of the abuse of power are described. The first is the development of cultural awareness in the multicultural team. It is the leader's responsibility to educate him/herself about the cultures represented in the team. The leader must also help the team members to become aware of their own cultural presuppositions and a basis must be formed for the open discussion on the cultural differences. This should result in the formation of a new organisational culture that is made up of the characteristics from each culture that can contribute to the potential and effectiveness of the group.

The second strategy is based on communication. The importance of communication was repeatedly emphasized in the empirical data.

Finally, the leader has a responsibility to build trust in the organisation. One respondent stated that attitude is more important than communication skills. This means being willing to unlearn some skills and communicate differently”. Not only must a leader develop an understanding for other cultures, s/he must develop and reflect a deep respect for the cultures. This attitude would build trust between the members of the organisation.

8.2.5 My initial hypothesis

Founded on the literature research and previous studies that I have done, as well as my personal experience and listening to the stories of others, I initially summarized my answers to the above questions as follows: The abuse of power takes place in all cultures. However, how the abuse is exercised and how it is perceived is dependent on the culture of the leader and the victim (of which the participants themselves are not always aware).

The theoretical and empirical research that I have carried out in this dissertation confirms the above hypothesis in some aspects: The abuse of power could probably take place in all cultures. Culture plays an important role as to how the abuse is exercised and how it is perceived. However, it is not only dependent on the culture of the leader and the victim, but also on the personality of the team players, their spiritual maturity, their past experiences and environment (for example the colleagues, the family etc.). This network verifies the complexity of work relationships and the complexity of preventing and resolving abusive behaviour in Christian organisations.

In the following subsection, I present my personal observations, extrapolations and impressions in more detail.

8.3 Self-reflexivity

As I approach the end of the theoretical and empirical research process, I reflect on my personal experience in leadership and with the cultures considered in this dissertation. I consider the aspects of the abuse of power and the general observations, extrapolations and impressions that have evolved throughout the research process.

In my reflections, I pose the question: What kind of interactions could a leader expect from a team that is made up of an English-speaking Canadian, a German (from the former West Germany) and a white South African? I believe that the initial impression of these three colleagues would not immediately indicate that there are drastic differences that could result in an abusive situation. All three have the same skin color and come from a “western” background. One can assume that all can speak English, including the German colleague.

However, the diagram from Hofstede et al (2010) from chapter 4 (4.3) that compares the three cultures in the context of the cultural dimensions and the table (4.4) on how the cultures perceive the cultural dimensions reveal that cultural differences could incite abusive processes. The South African would be comfortable with a higher power distance than the colleagues and, at the same time, the Canadian and the German could perceive the potentially more authoritarian culture as abusive. The South African may perceive that colleagues want more discussion in order to make decisions. Although all three come from individualistic cultures, the Canadian is more individualistic than his/her counterparts, and the German and South African may not understand how a Canadian can be tolerant and helpful, but, at the same time, feel comfortable to be alone.

The German scores high on uncertainty avoidance and has a need to reduce risks as far as possible. This may be perceived as the German having a lack of trust in the Canadian and South African colleagues: they plan thoroughly with their German colleague, but want to proceed with the work and resolve problems as they emerge. Their German colleague would need to resolve any possible upcoming problems in advance before proceeding with the task at hand. This also applies to the short- and long-term orientation in which the German has a need to plan carefully far into the future, whereas his/her team member plans for the more imminent time period. This dimension reflects the greatest contrast between the cultures, according to the diagram.

A further aspect that could be challenging for the team is communication. The data that emerged from the theoretical and empirical research emphasized the importance of communication. Although all three cultures fall into the low-context category (Erin Meyer 2014), the German would tend to communicate in more detail than the colleagues. The communication patterns (Lewis 2015) showed that the German would begin meetings promptly, spend time on the past, examine all facts, make a proposal, discuss counter arguments and offer a new proposal. In the time that s/he would still be examining facts, the Canadian and South African would have laid the facts on the table, discussed pros and cons, and would have found a win-win solution and gone into action.

The responses recorded in the empirical data from the participants repeatedly emphasized the importance that effective communication plays in preventing and/or resolving the abuse of power in Christian organisations. This includes communicating the goals and purpose of the organisation. It also requires colleagues to be good listeners and demands asking for feedback to insure that the message has been understood. The stories indicated that a lack of communication leading to misunderstandings can occur in all three cultures.

A further challenge that this team may have is their understanding of a multicultural context. Based on my experience in the cultures and the theoretical and empirical data, I would describe the cultural understanding of the three cultures in the following way. The Canadian lives in a multicultural context, but due to his/her individualistic culture and tolerant attitude, s/he allows the various cultures their space and does not feel a need to understand the person in the cultural context. It is only in the last ten years that the German has been directly confronted with what it means to live with other cultures. The German has the attitude that there is one excellent way to carry out a task, and there are no other options. As a result, the German is still grappling with how to live and work with other cultures due to the influx of other culture groups in the last decade. One response indicates that the German is realizing that multiculturalism is now becoming an issue: the importance of communication in multicultural teams is gaining in significance in Germany. The South African has grown up with immersion in and confrontation with other cultures. Multiculturalism is a way of life. The responses show that South African leaders are particularly aware of the differences between culture groups and the challenges that it brings.

Finally, the response from one respondent reveals further potential for the abuse of power. The person stated that, when a conflict arises in the organisation, s/he must reflect on whether it has developed as a result of the eight cultures represented in the team, or if it is the result of personality. When asked which situations would cause a leader to abuse his/her power, the respondents chose the response relating to personality more than any other optional response. This opens up an entire field of consideration, and, in the context of the German, Canadian and South African team, not only must one consider their cultural dimensions, their communication patterns, but also their individual personalities and their character that are further influenced through their spiritual maturity, leadership training and experience.

I would close this subsection with a question that has formulated throughout the process of writing this dissertation. Are the dangers of the abuse of power greater in multicultural teams where the cultures are somewhat similar and the diversities are hidden than in teams where the cultures are obviously different from each other? Is it easier to work together and discuss the differences when they are obvious and have an open, direct impact on teamwork? This is a question that multicultural teams should consider.

As a result of my personal experience and carrying out the research for this dissertation, I conclude that the potential for the abuse of power in multicultural organisations in which the cultures appear to be similar is great. The covert differences lurk latently, waiting

for an organisational situation such as a financial crisis, a leader with abusive tendencies, poor communication, a work overload or a difficult personality to expose the differences and create an abusive environment. It is crucial that the team members become aware of the cultural differences that influence their interaction and effectiveness.

8.4 Conclusion

Osmer's four core tasks of practical theological interpretation have assisted in guiding the response and providing a structure for the research interpretation in this dissertation. The four core tasks provide the structure for the conclusion and overview of this dissertation.

Chapter one begins with the introduction to the dissertation, states the aims, background and value of the research. The key terms are introduced: power, the abuse of power, Christian organisations and cultural comparisons. The methodology for the theoretical research is presented: the fields of study (Theological Ethics, Christian Leadership and Cultural Studies). The research questions are stated, and the main theoretical sources and the themes of the chapters containing the theoretical research are listed. I present Osmer's tasks and determine that I will structure the dissertation according to these tasks.

Chapters two, three and four cover the theoretical research. Chapter two discusses the descriptive task by answering the question: "What is going on?" Authority and power are defined, as are power in leadership, the power bases, ethics and power, and the abuse of power. Also those aspects that define abusive leaders are discussed. The chapter continues by presenting aspects that define the victims of abuse and the effects of the abuse of power. In discussing these aspects of the abuse of power, the interpretive task was addressed and the attempt was made to determine why the abuse of power takes place.

Chapter three deals with the normative task and answers the question: "What ought to be going on?" Ethical Christian leadership and what constitutes an ethical Christian leader are the main topics of research. Spiritual transformation, love, servant leadership, accountability, trust and forgiveness are discussed to describe what constitutes an ethical Christian leader. This chapter concludes with a section on Christian leadership in multicultural teams, including building trust, building a third culture, resolving leadership tensions and situational leadership.

Chapter four continues with the normative task and describes the results of past research results, specifically relevant for the Canadian, German and South African cultures. This was done on the basis of the cultural research from Hofstede et al (2010), Meyer (2014), Lewis (2015) and House et al (2004).

Chapter five explains the empirical research, including a description of the requirements for the research participants. Survey-based research and the development of the questionnaire are described. Ethical considerations and the choice for comparative analysis of the data are stated.

Chapter six goes on to cover the empirical task by analysing the data from the research questionnaire. The data is collected in tables according to the three cultures represented in this dissertation. The empirical research data on the topics of ethical leadership, power, the abuse of power and culture are examined and compared.

In Chapter seven solutions for the prevention and early recognition of the abuse of power in Christian organisations address the pragmatic task and answer the question: How might we respond? Solutions for the abusive leader, the victim, the organisation and for multicultural organisations are discussed. In chapter eight the research questions are answered on the basis of the theoretical and empirical research data. Personal observations, extrapolations and impressions as well as recommendations for future research conclude this chapter.

I conclude this research dissertation with these brief, final remarks. Over the last three years I have read and heard countless stories about the abuse of power. As I stated in chapter one, I have heard repetitively from people that they have a story. I have met people who are anxious to tell their story, as though it were therapeutic for them. The completion of this dissertation does not mean that the issues of the abuse of power, especially in multicultural Christian organisations are resolved. We have enough stories about the abuse of power. It is time for leaders of organisations to realize that they carry a responsibility to build strong teams and to open up the conversation about the abuse of power. That will be the only way to activate preventative measures and find solutions to the “quiet”, but very destructive form of abuse.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

August 03, 2016

Dear Research Participant,

Some time ago I contacted you per Email, asking you if you would be willing to assist me in my research for my Master's Dissertation (Master of Theology in Christian Leadership and Ethics UNISA) with the title: "An Analysis of the Abuse of Power in Christian Organisations: Cultural Comparisons from Canada, Germany and South Africa".

The purpose of this dissertation is to determine the effects that cultural variations have on leadership, abuse of power and the perception of abusive leadership as relevant to the Canadian, German and South African cultures.

I have nearly completed the theoretical research and am finally at a point where I am ready to carry out the empirical research, gathering data with the use of the questionnaire (see below). I am very grateful to you for your willingness to participate in this study.

As mentioned in my initial Email, the data that you share in this research will be used in such a way as to protect your privacy and identity. It also shall not reveal any affiliation you have with any organisation on which you may base your answers to the questions. Six leaders in each of the three countries represented in this research have consented to participate in this study.

I am sending the questionnaire to you in a format that allows you to answer the questions directly without having to print the questionnaires. Please let me know if you have difficulty using this format. I am required to collect a signed participant informed consent form from each of the participants. I would be grateful if you would print the form, sign and scan it and return it to me per Email.

Please return your responses to this questionnaire by August 20, 2016.

Kind Regards,

Marian Winter

An Analysis of the Abuse of Power in Christian Organisations: Cultural Comparisons from Canada, Germany and South Africa

Participant informed consent form

Background and information:

My name is Marian Winter, and I am a Master of Theology student in the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology, University of South Africa. The title of my research dissertation is “An Analysis of the Abuse of Power in Christian Organisations: Cultural Comparisons from Canada, Germany and South Africa”.

If you are willing to participate in this data collection process, please fill in this form.

1. I understand that my name will not be revealed in the dissertation and my confidentiality will be protected. The data will be destroyed after completion of the degree.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research at any time, without supplying any reasons.
3. Marian Winter has fully apprised me of the purpose and methodology of the proposed research.
4. I am aware that my participation will involve answering a questionnaire with the purpose of collecting research data including the topics of leadership, culture and abuse of power.
5. I am aware that no remuneration is involved in my participation.
6. I undertake to answer the given questions as carefully and honestly as possible.

I agree to participate on the basis of the above conditions.

Participant's signature

.....

Participant's name (Please print)

.....

Date

An Analysis of the Abuse of Power in Christian Organisations:

Cultural Comparisons from Canada, Germany and South Africa

Questionnaire for Leaders of Christian Organisations

1. Personal information

1.1 What is your nationality?

☐ Canadian

☐ German

☐ South African

1.2 ☐ Male ☐ Female

1.3 Age:

1.4 What leadership position do you currently hold (or held recently): for example: top management (CEO), personnel manager, etc.

2. What is an ethical Leader?

2.1 What do you consider to be the 5 most important attributes of an ethical leader? List in order of importance (number 1 being what you consider to be most important).

2.1.1

2.1.2

2.1.3

2.1.4

2.1.5

2.2 What do you consider to be 5 actions/types of behaviour that leaders should consciously avoid?

List in order of importance (1 being what you consider to be most important to avoid).

2.2.1

2.2.2

2.2.3

2.2.4

2.2.5

2.3 Which persons/positions (e.g. accountants) are directly accountable to you in your leadership position?

2.4 As a leader in a Christian organisation, to which persons/positions (e.g. the CEO) are you accountable?

2.5 Some leaders of Christian organisations believe that they are called by God and are, therefore, only accountable to God and should not be challenged on their actions or decisions. What is your view of this opinion?

3. Power

3.1 How would you define power?

3.2 Two social psychologists, John French and Bertram Raven, constructed a power base model on the basis of their studies on power. Leaders have different qualities, qualifications and/or capacities on which they base their power to carry out their responsibilities. The different forms of power bases affect how one leads. Choose up to 3 power bases that you can identify to be necessary in a leadership position in a Christian organisation and number them in the order of significance in the chart, with 1 being the most significant.

3.3 Which of the power bases listed below, if any, would you consider most likely to result in the abuse of power in a leadership context? Mark up to three with an X.

Power Bases French/Raven

Power Base	Explanation	Number 1, 2, 3 Important in leadership	X – conducive to abuse (up to 3)
Coercive Power	Leading through force, threat or punishment, submission of followers		
Reward Power Base	Offering rewards for obedience, performance or compliance; denying others something for failing to meet expectations		
Legitimate Power Base	A leader is designated to a position by election, selection or appointment.		
Referent Power Base	Based on the group and organisational affiliations that a leader has; involves charm and admiration.		
Expert Power Base	The leader has expertise, has access to information, and can decide whether to keep it or pass it on.		
Informational Power Base	A leader has influence in possessing knowledge that is important for others.		

4. Abuse of power

4.1 How would you define the abuse of power in Christian organisations?

4.2 List 3 personality characteristics that one would most often find in leaders who tend to be abusive.

4.2.1

4.2.2

4.2.3

4.3 How prevalent is the abuse of power in Christian organisations? (Tick one)

- ☐ Non-existent – Christians in leadership do not abuse their power.
- ☐ Occurs occasionally in some organisations, but is not significant.
- ☐ Occurs in nearly all organisations.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.4 On what level does the abuse of power most often take place? (Tick one).

- ☐ Board level (Board abusing leadership and/or subordinates)
- ☐ Leadership level (Leaders abuse those directly under their authority)
- ☐ Financial level
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.5 Which situations (events or contexts) within organisations carry potential for leaders to abuse their power?

4.6 What causes leaders to abuse the power in their leadership positions? Please number in order of significance, with 1 being most significant.

- ☐ Lack of experience (insecurity)
- ☐ Lack of spiritual maturity
- ☐ Need to control the work processes of colleagues for whom the leader is responsible
- ☐ Personality disorders (e.g. passive-aggressive, emotionally disconnected, narcissistic, manic-depressive, obsessive compulsive, dependent)
- ☐ Satisfaction in having power over others (power seeking)
- ☐ Ignorance about how to manage others in an organisation
- ☐ Lack of clarity of purpose, goals and responsibilities in the organisation
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.7 Have you ever been personally involved in a situation in an organisation where power was abused, or been close to someone who was in an abusive situation in a Christian organisation? If so, please answer questions 4.8 - 4.15.

4.8 Briefly tell the story of this incident of abuse of power.

4.9 At what point did you realize that this was a situation of abuse of power?

- ☐ At the onset of the process.
- ☐ Realization of the effect on the person who was being abused
- ☐ When others made me aware of it.
- ☐ When I was personally affected.
- ☐ When it was over.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.10 What enabled you to identify it as abuse? (Tick all the appropriate responses)

The person who was abused (this could include you):

- ☐ was ignored.
- ☐ was belittled.
- ☐ heard people talking about me (him/her) behind my (his/her) back.
- ☐ did not receive information about decisions that affected the work/department.
- ☐ was marginalised and/or excluded, though still employed
- ☐ was discharged with/without reason.
- ☐ was not asked for inputs on issues relating to my (his/her) work.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.11 Do you believe the leader realised s/he was abusing his/her power? Yes ☐ No ☐

4.12 Do you believe the leader deliberately abused his/her power? Yes ☐ No ☐

4.13 How did the leader react?:

- ☐ S/he recognized the abuse and apologized.
- ☐ S/he did not understand that there could be a problem with his/her leadership actions.
- ☐ S/he refused to talk about the issues of a possible abuse of power.
- ☐ S/he retaliated in some way.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.14 How did you (or the victim in 4.8) feel as a result of experiencing abuse in a Christian organisation? Please tick up to 3 applicable responses.

- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Sad
- ☐ Demotivated
- ☐ Incompetent, questioned my (his/her) capability to carry out the responsibilities
- ☐ Withdrew from colleagues
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.15 How did this abuse affect the relevant colleagues? Please tick up to three applicable responses.

- ☐ They were not aware of it.
- ☐ They were supportive of me (the victim).
- ☐ They ignored me (him/her).
- ☐ They turned against me (him/her) and that I (s/he) resign from my (his/her) position.
- ☐ They supported me (him/her), but encouraged me (him/her) to leave before I (s/he) experienced further abuse.
- ☐ They did not acknowledge that the action was abuse; they felt it was justifiable behaviour for a leader.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.16 In the above incident (4.8) of abuse of power, can you identify a “third party” – a person who was aware that the abuse was taking place, and could have prevented the abuse from taking place, or could have halted the process?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4.16.1 Did this person choose not to become involved? Yes ☐ No ☐

4.16.2 Please explain.

4.17 How often do you feel that subordinates abuse their power in their relationship to their leader(s) or the person to whom they are accountable?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Happens more often than leaders abusing their power

4.18 If you have experienced that subordinates abuse their power, how was it expressed? (Tick all relevant answers)

- ☐ Allotted tasks were not adequately performed
- ☐ The person created conflict in the team
- ☐ The person spoke negatively about the leader
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.19 Do you believe that subordinates have the right to question the actions or decisions of their leader? (Tick up to three responses)

- ☐ Never, as it shows a lack of respect.
- ☐ Only if asked by the leader.
- ☐ It depends on the nature of the situation.
- ☐ Yes, it is important to be direct and open on all issues.
- ☐ Yes, but in a respectful manner.
- ☐ Yes, but through the correct channels.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.20 What do you believe to be the organisational results of abuse of power? (Tick all relevant responses)

- ☐ Irreparable divisions between colleagues.
- ☐ The organisation becomes dysfunctional.
- ☐ People leave the organisation.
- ☐ Organisations close down.
- ☐ Abusive leaders are reprimanded for their behaviour and relationships are reconciled.
- ☐ Abusive leaders are asked to leave the organisation and are replaced.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.21 Which types of abuse have you encountered, either personally or organisationally in your experience as a leader or a follower?

- ☐ Spiritual
- ☐ Emotional
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Sexual
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

4.22 Under which circumstances could you be tempted to yourself abuse the power you exercise in your leadership position? (Tick all relevant responses)

- ☐ A colleague has a personality that I find irritating.
- ☐ A colleague is from a different culture.
- ☐ A colleague attempts to give inputs and ideas regarding the work.
- ☐ The organisation has financial stress.
- ☐ I receive criticism from below or above.
- ☐ Your colleague(s) has/have an opinion that conflicts with your opinion.
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

5. Solutions

5.1 List three ways in which a leader can build trust in an organisation.

5.1.1.

5.1.2.

5.1.3.

5.2 How do you feel about a leader who asks for forgiveness? (Tick all appropriate responses).

☐ It shows weakness.

☐ It shows strength.

☐ It shows insecurity.

☐ Other (Please explain):

5.3 What is love and how is love relevant to leadership?

5.4 What have you already done personally to prevent the abuse of power in your organisation? (Tick all relevant responses)

☐ Nothing

☐ I have reported abuse to a senior colleague

☐ I have reported abuse to a whistle-blowing department or organisation

☐ Other (Please explain):

5.5 What has your organisation already done to prevent the abuse of power within the organisation?

☐ Every person in the organisation is accountable to another person.

☐ All persons in leadership account to the board or a similar head.

☐ We have staff meetings on a regular basis.

☐ Regular personnel evaluations are carried out where all colleagues are allowed to voice their opinions.

☐ Other (Please explain):

5.6 How do Christian organisations that you personally have knowledge of deal with abusive leadership? (Tick all relevant responses)

☐ The abuse is ignored.

☐ Leaders are warned that their behaviour is inappropriate

☐ Leaders are confronted and they are required to correct their actions.

☐ Leaders are removed from their position.

☐ Subordinates are reprimanded and advised to respect the abusive leaders.

☐ Other (Please explain):

5.7 How do you think Christian organisations SHOULD deal with abusive leaders? (Tick up to three relevant responses)

☐ Let it run its course.

☐ Leaders should be warned and their actions monitored.

☐ Leaders should be confronted and given an opportunity to correct their actions, even if it requires counselling or mentoring.

☐ Leaders should be removed from their position immediately.

☐ Subordinates should be reprimanded and advised to respect the leadership.

☐ Other (Please explain):

5.8 At an organisational level, in order to prevent or address abuse of power, leaders should (tick which are applicable):

- ☐ offer workshops on what constitutes the abuse of leadership
- ☐ introduce a code of conduct
- ☐ carry out regular assessments
- ☐ set up an anonymous reporting facility
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

5.9 Are you aware of any centre in your country that people within Christian organisations who feel that they are victims of abuse of power can contact to report the abuse and receive counselling? If so, describe the system in three brief points.

6. Culture and the Abuse of Power

6.1 Please rank the following statements from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

	Cultural Aspect	Ranking
6.1.1	I prefer a leadership style in which leaders and followers are considered to be equal and are allowed equal inputs and participation in decision-making.	
6.1.2	As a leader, I prefer to make the necessary decisions myself.	
6.1.3	I believe that leadership positions lead to loneliness (It's lonely at the top).	
6.1.4	Organisational tasks can best be accomplished in teams.	
6.1.5	I feel comfortable taking risks in making organisational decisions.	
6.1.6	I enjoy change and development.	
6.1.7	I need clear rules and goals in the organisation.	
6.1.8	I prefer short-term planning.	
6.1.9	Communication in an organisation should be precise, detailed and clear.	
6.1.10	According to my experience, multicultural teams in Christian organisations are aware of their cultural differences and discuss them to avoid misunderstandings.	
6.1.11	Most Christian leaders have an awareness of their own cultural characteristics.	
6.1.12	Leaders are not aware and impose their own cultural preferences on others.	

6.2 In your opinion, how often is the perception of abuse of power in organisations related to misunderstandings due to cultural differences?

___ seldom

___ often

___ occurs the same in monocultural and multicultural organisations

6.3 What is the significance of the communication skills of leaders, especially in multicultural teams?

6.4 What examples of the abuse of power resulting from cultural misunderstandings or assumptions have you experienced? Please explain in about 5-10 lines.

Thank-you for your hard work and for participating in this study! It is greatly appreciated